10. Ed

AN ACCOUNT OF SOME Remarkable Paſſages IN THE LIFE OF A PRIVATE GENTLEMAN; With REFLECTIONS thereon.

In THREE PARTS.

Relating to Trouble of Mind, ſome violent Temptations, and a Recovery; in order to awaken the Preſumptuous, and encourage the Deſpondent.

Left under his own Hand, to be communicated to the Publick after his Deceaſe.

Sane Voti me participem ſtatuam, ſi vel uni animæ, uno momento, una aliqua pia & ſancta cogitatio ex hujus libelli lectione exſurgat. *Gerh. Medit.*

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

THE Author leaving the uſe of his Name at diſcretion; for ſome Reaſons 'tis thought fit to ſuppreſs it. The privacy of his Perſon, expreſs'd in the Title, indicates its uſeleſneſs. Things of this nature muſt carry their own evidence, to gain acceptance, which when they do, Names are of little value; ſince the judicious repute them but Ciphers till ſome real figures of truth compleat the Sum: While ſome are candid in expoſing the Flaws of their Lives, charitably to warn others of their danger, others are as critically cenſorious, and as ready to make odious Reflections, inſtead

of expreſſing gratitude, and learning Caution. Theſe intimations may ſuffice, why the Author is not made publick. If ſome paſſages in theſe Papers relating to Fact, ſhou'd be called in queſtion by any ſerious Perſons, they may meet with ſome ſtill living, who aſſiſted the Party in his diſconſolate Hours, who will be ready to bear their Teſtimony to Truth as occaſion ſhall offer. After all, if the Hiſtorick part be frown'd upon in point of Truth, as fact; or reality, as repreſented in the following Diſcourſe, a thing not at all unuſual in matters of this nature; 'tis hop'd ſome ſerious Truths here deliver'd, may be of ſome uſe to well diſpoſed Perſons: And ſince that will in great meaſure anſwer the Author's true deſign, I'll acquieſce in thoſe hopes, ſolemnly recommending it to the Divine Benediction, the very Life and Soul of all Performances. THE

THE PREFACE.

WHAT I here relate, if I know my own Heart, is entirely dedicated to the Honor of God, and Service of Mankind. I can't think or expreſs my ſelf ſuitably to the Mercy of God, in which I have been ſo liberal a ſharer; nor expoſe enough the rage and ſubtilty of the Legions of Hell, from whoſe Tyranny I ſuffer'd ſo terribly: The truth of both will appear in the ſequel of this Narrative. God deals variouſly with his Children, as Satan does with his Vaſſals; the divulging then ſecrets of this kind, may inform the inobſervant, too great Strangers to themſelves, and theſe Exerciſes: Nay, the Judicious and Experienced ſtand not ſo faſt, but they may receive a ſhock, and under Temptation, parallel Caſes may help and comfort. God Diſciplines ſome, to warn and encourage others; ſhou'd I then ſuppreſs his Viſitations, ſo inſtructive, I might injure that Deſign, and defraud God of his Glory. This is the leaſt I owe my great Lord and Maſter, and if I can

accompliſh it, I'm no farther ſollicitous what Cenſure paſſes upon me. If my Friends therefore, when I'm gone, think it needful to expoſe my Name, they may uſe their diſcretion; ſince none can load me more, than I ſhou'd my ſelf.

The World abounds in variety of good Books; but were more Experimental Caſes publiſh'd, the Devil's Kingdom wou'd be more confounded. Many may have uſeful Papers by them, which poſſibly may ne'er ſee the Light: If I can but excite ſuch to the diſcharge of their Duty, while they ſee one expoſe himſelf, happy ſhall I repute my ſelf in gaining that part of my Deſign: But leaving that to Providence, if I can but any way aſſiſt one poor Soul, I ſhall ne'er repent my Labour.

Such as engage in Subjects that blacken their own Character, can't rationally come within the imputation of Vanity. When the Favours of Heaven are mention'd, 'tis purely to the Glory of God's exceeding free Grace, without the leaſt ſhadow of Merit in me, who am leſs than the leaſt of any of his Mercies, and deſerve nothing but pure Wrath and Vengeance. If any think ſome Paſſages ſeem ſtrange, let them reſt aſſured they are no leſs true; and ſuch as prove ſo uncharitable, as to diſcredit one they can't juſtly ſuppoſe has any private intereſt to ſerve, let them know they injure themſelves more than him.

I caſt the whole, for better order and diſtinction, into Three parts. The firſt conſiſts of Paſſages of leſſer Moment, but very conducive to give light to what follows. He that contemns ſmall things, ſhall fall by little and little,

tle, ſays the Son of Syrach. *Vice is a growing miſchief, tho' its firſt appearance be but ſmall; and he that ſees not the Hand of Heaven in leſſer Warnings and Kindneſſes, grows habitually indiſpos'd to ſee greater, till he dams up the courſe of God's Bounty, and brings down his hot diſpleaſure. The ſecond contains a very peculiar diſpenſation; ſome ſevere and remarkable Providences. The third expreſſes the glorious Methods of Divine Grace in a Recovery. I here deviate more from the Hiſtorick part, to pay a deference to what I'm ſo much beholden, even the free Grace of God, and promote a modeſt, humble, healing Spirit. Examples are more cogent than Precepts; but ſince they confirm each the other, I interſperſe ſome Reflections. The Stile is not polite, nor is the Method calculated to pleaſe the Sons of Art: My Buſineſs is not to amuſe, but edifie, which engages me to write in as familiar Terms as poſſible. I certainly purſue very falſe Meaſures, were I ſtudious and able to gain repute, ſhou'd I attempt it by this Method. What I'm ambitious of, is, that I hope of an attempt at leaſt to do ſome good: And bleſs God for enclining me to ſacrifice what ſome are ſo fond of, to promote this bleſſed end; which I eſteem a ſignal Favour.*

I'm well appris'd, how obnoxious I am to cenſure, by the Conceſſions I make in the firſt and ſecond Part. I know I provoke the ſcorn of a formidable Crew, who won't fail to pretend to draw my Picture with my own Pencil. I have given them ſome features they'll preſume are purely Natural, ſo will not doubt of hitting my Complexion, and poſt me up for an errant Me-

lancholick. They are your fierce contenders for meer Fleſh and Blood, Matter and Motion: Who talk as deſpotically as if they had Wiſdom by Pattent from Heaven, and were inveſted in the ſole propriety of true ſenſe; and to queſtion their dictates, were to oppoſe the very Oracles of Reaſon. If a Man talk a Syllable beyond the reach of Mechanick Powers, they immediately clap him up for a Lunatick in their own Fanſies, and tell the World he Dreams or Raves. Dr. Hackwell *in his Apology for the Providence of God, tells us,* 'Tis impudence, after ſuch full and repeated atteſtations of the Being and Operations of Devils, to deny them. *Such as fairly conſult the Narrative of Capt.* Bell *at the beginning of* Luther's Colloq; Menſalia: *What the Lord* Clarendon's *Hiſtory mentions of the Duke of* Buckingham, *and compare that with what Sir* Henry Wotton *relates of him in his Life and Death, can't, I think, elude the force of thoſe Convictions. To confront the many Hiſtories upon Record of this Nature, with the idle Stories of Deceivers, or weak and credulous People, is trifling and ridiculous; and demonſtrates how meanly the Sons of Wiſdom can employ the mighty Talent they pretend to; while they baſely force their Reaſon to truckle to the ſordid intereſt of their Luſts: For what does all the force of their Concluſions of this nature amount to, but this, that becauſe there are many Tales and Romances, there are no true Hiſtories nor real accounts of things? To compare* Becker, Scot, *and* Web---r, *with the many Great and Learned Men that have written on this Subject,*

ject, is like equallizing a Muſhroon or two of a few Hours growth and fall, with all the ſtately ſtanding Cedars of Lebanon.

It muſt be granted, ſome good Men have been too ready to give their aſſent to matters of this kind at the firſt rebound, and approved themſelves more impregnated with the innocency of the Dove, than the ſubtilty of the Serpent, which has expoſed them to fallacy and impoſition: But what more can be inferr'd hence, than what an ingenious Perſon has ſaid upon it? The beſt Men have this misfortune, upon no other ground, than that they are the beſt, to be the more credulous, and inclining rather to ſecurity, than diffidence, ſo eaſily give advantage to thoſe, who, by their craft and inſinuations, make it their deſign to triumph over their ſimplicity: Who thinking there cannot be a greater ſubtilty, than to live without ſubtilty, imagine it ſomewhat unreaſonable to conceive, at the firſt ſight, any ſuſpicion of thoſe by whom they had not as yet been over-reach'd. *Blondel* of the Sybils, p. 2.

Such as turn to Caſaubon of Credulity, p. 31. *ſo on, will ſee what Principles act thoſe Men that deny the Operations of Spirits, what Characters he and other learned Men give of them: Particularly of* Scot, p. 40, *and* 41. *and what ſuits him may, for ought I know, the whole Clan; but that I leave to better judgments to determine. I know ſomething of the Gentlemen I have been ſpeaking of, and the ſtrength of their Arguments, and am no ſtranger to Eſſays on the Spleen. I'm ſure there is ſuch a natural Diſtemper, and as ſure there is a Devil,*

Devil, and ſuch a thing as Temptation. The grand Idol of this Faction liv'd and dy'd in Childiſh Fears of what he aſſerted had no Being, and ſome ſince in ſuch brutiſh ſtupidity, that if we ſhou'd meaſure the entity of the Soul by its degeneracy, one wou'd be tempted to think, ſuch really had little or none.

Others there are of Character for goodneſs, who will afford me a large ſhare of their Pity, as a Hypochondriacal Weakling, under the Power of deluſion. Some of theſe are no great Philoſophers, and much leſs skill'd in Phyſick; but for fear of being rank'd among low-ſoul'd, credulous Creatures, liſp ſo much after the mechanical Terms of the Men of Senſe, till they get the Shiboleth of their Party. If a Man budge an Ace beyond the Sphere of atra bilis, *he's dub'd an Enthuſiaſtick Viſionary, and what he ſays is compared to the Rapſodies of a* Roſecrucian. *I dare not implead theſe Gentlemens Virtue, but muſt their diſcretion. They abet not Sadduciſm deſignedly, but eventually: For whatever is maintain'd to be purely natural, that's really the effect, in part or whole, of inviſible Powers, muſt be granted to have a tendency this way. I have heard ſome of theſe good Men deny with ſtrange poſitivity the agency of the Devil in plain Caſes, and ridicule Authentick Records of Apparitions, and other material Paſſages relating to the World of Spirits, that have long ſtood the teſt of time; and peremptorily to impute that to a Diſeaſe, which was the manifeſt effect of Temptation.*

What Caſaubon *and Dr.* Moor *aſſert of Enthuſiaſm, muſt be granted; but I can't ſuppoſe either of them abſolutely ſecluded thoſe Inſtan-*

ces of natural diſorders they mention, from interfering with all Diabolical impreſſions. The former does not, but aſſerts in expreſs Terms the contrary, as will appear hereafter: Nor can I ſuppoſe the latter ſhou'd, ſo ſmart a contender for the Being and Power of Spirits. I can't but wonder to find ſuch as allow the inſtrumentality of Satan in ordinary Temptations, ſo poſitively excluding it in extraordinary Caſes; 'Tis difficult to diſtinguiſh the impulſes of our own Spirits from his, in ſome violent movements of the Paſſions; but that he often acts there behind the Curtain, none but a Sadducee, I think, will peremptorily deny. Be ye angry, and Sin not; let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath: Neither give place to the Devil. *God tells us there are ſuch Beings, and in general deſcribes their Power and Employ, not to excite curioſity but watchfulneſs. 'Tis folly in us then to preclude their Influences in inſtances where their malicious Sagacity prompts them to intermingle, the more powerfully to deceive and work miſchief. If ſome Geſticulations, Vociferations, and other extatick Motions, may be accounted for from Mechanical Principles, does it therefore follow, theſe malignant Powers can't aſſociate with what's natural? or that it's no fair occaſion to play their pranks, while Mens preſumption runs ſtrong to natural Cauſes without any ſuſpicion of the concurrence of their Agency.*

Ephes. 4. 26, 27.

The Jews have a ſaying, Whoſo is angry, *omnes ſpecies Gehennæ ei dominantur,* is ſubject to the Power of infernal Fiends. *Buxt.*

Our Idea's of Spirits, I think, are moſtly fram'd by negative abſtractions: Sure then, in ſo abſtruce a Subject, Modeſty ſhou'd govern us more than confidence: If we know not their Nature, how can we their Operations? God only is properly καρδιογνώστα, *the Knower of Hearts; but how and to what degree Created Spirits converſe*

Acts 1. 24.

with

with ours, no Mortal can determine. What's imprinted on the Fancy, is generally allow'd to fall under their cognizance, but how much or little our more refin'd Idea's interfere with that Power, can't nicely be determin'd; nor conſequently how much preciſely of our Thoughts may fall within their ken: But this is certain, they'll give ſhrewder gueſſes, by collating hints they are Maſters of, than the moſt ſubtle Heads put together can. And if they can pry reflexivè *into theſe receſſes, why ſhou'd we queſtion their influences on the Body, in ſome unuſual Caſes?*

Let us take heed of ſtinting their Power, by the narrow Model of our weak conceptions: They have advantage enough of the greateſt acknowledgers of their Craft and Power, which they'll aſſuredly ply ſome way to their detriment; iet us then give them no more, by fond preſumptive Opinions, tending to ſecurity. If ſuch as ſtand on their guard are hard put to it, what a prey are they like to make of ſuch as weaken their Watch by ſlighty conceits of ſuch formidable Enemies? One of the greateſt Maſters of Reaſon in the preſent Age, gives us a conjecture about Spirits, which he is pleas'd to term extravagant, and to apologize for as a wild Fancy; which muſt be imputed to his Modeſty, ſince if there appear any exceſs in the thing, I think it's juſtly imputable to that only of ingenuity. And I wiſh ſome pretenders to his Talent wou'd ſtrive to imitate him more in this Virtue, to which they have the ſtrongeſt Motives, both from his Example and their own deficiencies, compared with his attainments: And as they'll find this part of him the eaſieſt and the

Lock of Humane Underſtanding Book 2. Ch. 23. p. 162, and 163. 2d. *Edit.*

the juſteſt for them to follow, ſo in fine if they attain it, they ſhall feel it moſt profitable and highly advantageous. The Paragrave is too long to inſert here, and I ſhall not do it ſo much injury as to diſmember it, but only intimate, that it relates to ſome advantages Spirits may be conceiv'd to have over us; whither I refer the Curious. Let ſuch as abound in their own ſenſe to hammer out evaſions and natural ſolutions in moſt palpable Caſes, be at length conjured to conſider better; if not to the altering of their ſentiments, yet at leaſt to ſilence, that they prejudice not others. Let them remember they oppoſe the Judgments of many of the beſt and greateſt Men; that Arguments from the beſt Topicks, from Scripture, Reaſon and Experience, fly in their Faces: Let Shame effect ſomething of that which better Reaſons ſhou'd entirely.

A Learned Man tells us, The ſincere ardent Affections of devout Souls may be attended with ſome kind of Enthuſiaſm. For Enthuſiaſm, as well as Zeal and other natural things, may be well uſed; and being rightly circumſtantiated, and ſubſervient to a better Principle, become irreprehenſible. Some obſerve that no great Work of the Brain, that begot much admiration in the World, was ever achiev'd without ſome kind of Enthuſiaſm; and the ſame may be affirm'd of the moſt tranſcendently Virtuous and Heroical Actions. *If this be true, as I ſee not but it may, without giving any advantage to Materialiſts, I can't conceive why we ſhou'd admit a degree of natural Enthuſiaſm, ſocial with the operations*

Dr. *Cudworth* Serm. 2d. p. 260.

of

of the Holy Spirit, and yet deny the injections and operations of Satan in Wicked Perſons, under Enthuſiaſtick circumſtances. The Doctor's ſuppoſition may be allow'd upon the ſame foot, that encouragement is to Aged and Infirm Perſons, who complain of a ſuſpenſe of that flow of Comforts they had formerly: For tho' God may in an extraordinary manner, ſometimes ſupply theſe natural defects by more liberal effuſions of the Spirit of Conſolation, yet this muſt not be made the Standard of his uſual proceedure, who commonly works thus, not only with, but according to the State of Nature; and all know how much the flow of Affection depend upon the vigor of the Conſtitution. I hope this may be ſaid without the leaſt prejudice to the aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit; if not, I utterly abjure the thought with deteſtation.

Bleſſed be God, we need no piæ fraudes *to ſupport our holy Religion, let them uſe Legends that more need them: No, nor any extraordinary appearances, having recourſe to a more ſure Word of Prophecy: But ſtill, when a wiſe and kind Providence condeſcends to afford us any collateral Evidences, 'tis our Wiſdom thankfully to receive and improve ſuch acceſſional helps to our Faith, and not rudely to baffle and reject them. Satan's Power is much leſſen'd ſince the Preaching of the Goſpel; and wou'd to God we made a better uſe of it; but ſome talk as if he had little or nothing to do here, and acted no oftner than he appear'd, and appear'd no oftner than meer Fear and Fancy rais'd him. The execrable Crimes of ſome, make them look like incarnate Devils, and beſpeak their infuſions, and ſo declare their exiſtence: But if that be*

not allow'd, I'm ſure ſuch enormities demonſtrate the monſtrous depravity of humane Nature. But the true State of our Caſe, I take to be like one ſtanding on the Brow of a Precipice; he may tumble by his own weight, but a blaſt of Wind will ſet him going ſooner. If ſome Relations in Glanvil, *&c. be errant Stories, does it follow all the reſt are ſo? To detect an idle Vagrant, is a uſeful piece of Charity, as well as relieving a real Object; becauſe the multitude of Cheats diſcourage Bounty, from a fear of miſplacing it: But ſtill it's allow'd better in difficult Caſes, to give to two unworthy Objects, rather than ſend one that's real, empty away. The Alluſion is plain, and I wiſh ſome rigid Inquiſitors would ſeriouſly apply it.*

I principally addreſs my ſelf to ſuch, who tho' they are loth to be impos'd on, yet are willing to conſtrue juſt deſigns fairly: For the ſake of ſuch I venture to expoſe my ſelf to the ſcoffs of the giggling fraternity, who muſt have their turn of laughing. To avoid this, I have not been ſo wary as I might, having in many things conſulted Conſcience more, than what many will needs call Prudence. Such as deſire to form a true judgment of matters here contain'd, ſhou'd read it through e're they paſs their Verdict, at leaſt the Second Part. If after all any doubt, the Day is coming which will evidence matter of Fact here related real truth, and to that I appeal in the Face of all Cavils. I thought it needful in ſome Caſes to quote Authority, ſince I had none of my own: And ſometimes even Truth it ſelf needs ſome help this way, to keep her in Countenance, and

recom-

recommend her to ſome Mens genius. I take the freedom now and then, tho' rarely, humbly to recommend a Book to others, as hoping they may reap the ſame advantage, if they dare venture their time and pains upon ſuch credit. Why I ſay ſo much of the Devil here, will appear hereafter, and I wiſh all be not too little to convince ſome obſtinate Perſons. I moſt heartily beſeech Almighty God to accompany this attempt with his Bleſſing, which only can inſpire it with a quickning Virtue, the great Soul that animates all things: That thus it may ſome way ſubſerve his Honor and the good of many; and here Centering, I leave my ſelf and this poor Performance, I truſt, in ſafe Hands.

ERRATA.

PAGE 31. line 2. for *and* read *that*: pag. 30. l. 22. leave out *a*. p. 91. l. 30. for *and* r. *that*. p. 111. l. 4. for *hint* r. *hints*. p. 114. l. 16. r. *Talons*. p. 165. laſt line r. *ſunk*. p. 164. l. 11, for *effect* r. *affect*. p. 303. l. 7. for *Stake* r. *ſhake*.

THE

AN ACCOUNT OF SOME Remarkable Paſſages IN THE LIFE OF A PRIVATE GENTLEMAN. WITH REFLEXIONS thereon.

In Three Parts.

PART I.

Conſiſting of the leſſer Paſſages of his LIFE.

I Shall very briefly mention ſome Matters of leſſer Moment, to give the clearer Light to what I chiefly intend. The Receipt of great Mercies highly aggravate Sins, and Sins reflected on, endear Divine Favours; and both compared and expoſed to View, imprint a noble Idea

of the free and boundleſs Goodneſs of the bleſſed God, and a true Repreſentation of the vile Ingratitude of our baſe, helliſh Hearts. In Conformity to theſe Meaſures, I'll give ſome ſhort Specimens, by Way of Introduction, and weave in the reſt occaſionally, as they more naturally fall in with the Thread of the Diſcourſe.

I was born of pious and religious Parents, who nurtured me in the Fear of God, and inſtill'd holy Principles into me betimes, which had many kindly Effects. God's Mercy remarkably prevented me periſhing in the Birth. I came into the World in a calamitous Seaſon, but God protected me, tho' he knew he cheriſh'd a Viper in His Boſom; one that would prove too much a Traytor to Him and His own beſt Intereſt. Thus admirably free was the Kindneſs of my bleſſed Maſter in my Infant State, when I neither ask'd nor deſerv'd his Care.

The ſame good Hand of Providence attended me as I advanced in my tender Years. I was often very near Death, and after narrowly eſcaped Drowning; but God ſignally interpoſed, as He did afterwards in ſome dangerous Falls that might have ended my Days, or made them very diſconſolate. In this my early Age, Satan and his Inſtruments began to play their Part, to ruine my Soul; but God kept me from Defilement, when I thought not of my Danger. Not long after, God in his great Mercy begun with me, to convince me of Sin, as I was reading Mr. *Allyn*'s *Call to the Uncon-*

Unconverted: His plain and ſerious Method was ſet ſo home on my Heart, that it fill'd me with Pleaſure, to think I was out of Hell; the Torments of which he lively deſcrib'd. This was the firſt ſerious, awakening Impreſſion that I remember I felt; for which I now heartily bleſs God; and tho' I careleſly ſuffer'd it to wear off in great meaſure, yet I verily believe, I ne'er quite loſt it. Thus did God countermine the Devil's Deſign betimes, and arm me againſt the Temptations that ſoon follow'd. And it coſt me very dear for not improving this ſtrong Conviction, which I deſire all to conſider; to excite Watchfulneſs; to cultivate all ſuch bleſſed Motions; leaſt they pay as dear for their Neglect, as they'll find at length I did.

None certainly live a few Years, but muſt paſs many Dangers; but ſo ſtupid are we for the moſt part, that we either obſerve them not, or preſently forget them; or ſacrifice to blind Fate, or Chance; which is worſe, if worſe can be: becauſe ſuch ſottiſh Principles are the true cauſe of our Inobſervancy and Forgetfulneſs. No wonder ſuch as ſhut God out of their Thoughts, ſhould be heedleſs and unthankful under all his Benefits, than which nothing certainly can be more baſe and brutiſh; to prevent which, is one reaſon why I here regiſter my own; to take Shame to my ſelf, excite my own Heart, and others to praiſe and caution; for want of which I have ſufficiently ſmarted.

While a School-Boy, ſome baſe Temptations offer'd in a Vice, which I fear reigns in ſuch Places. To tell of ſome Crimes, is to teach them, in the Opinion of many, which makes me but hint it. It's poſſible Divines ſeldom touch upon it, and that but darkly, for fear of corrupting the Fancy: But private Admonitions are highly requiſite; and ſuch as have the Tutorage of Youth, if they neglect them, may one Day be found very deficient in their Duty. The Vice, by what I then obſerved, may be very epidemick: The Conceit of its Harmleſneſs, as it's too apt to be reputed by heedleſs Youth, and the Secreſie of Acting it, contribute to its Prevalency. Dark Inſinuations are not ſufficient to lay in againſt it; but the Heinouſneſs of the Fact muſt ſo be diſplay'd, as may deter, by a full Conviction. This at firſt amaz'd me; but being frequently repeated, my Averſion gradually abated, till at length it tainted my Imagination, and became the Seminary of ſpeculative Wickedneſs in another kind; in kindling in my Breaſt Sparks of Impurity: And tho' they burſt not forth, as in others, being coop'd up by Shame, and the Rod of Conſcience, yet they ſmother'd too much within. For want of Conſideration I attended not to Purity of Heart, but *Phariſee* like, contented my ſelf in keeping the outſide of the Cup clean.

This Want of Heart-Work in Religion is the true Cauſe of the many foul Falls of Profeſſors; let all therefore take Warning, that deſire to be ſincere, and faithfully

fully oppoſe the Devices of Satan; let them be ſure to bar the Door of the Heart, and redouble their Guard, upon all Avenues leading to it; if the Serpent wind in here, he puſhes the very Center of our Strength: God principally demands the Heart, and accepts of nothing without it.

One Day, as I ventur'd to purſue an ordinary Diverſion, on the *Sabbath*, I met with a grievous Miſchance; upon which my Heart ſmote me, ſeeing the Hand of God in my Puniſhment. I ever made Conſcience of *Lying*, and being examined, I frankly confeſs'd my Fault, and what I thought was the Occaſion of the Diſaſter. I remember but two or three deliberate Lies, that I was guilty of; one of which, was moſt heinouſly aggravated, by ſome peculiar Circumſtances, thro' the Prevalency of Fear: I acknowledge this to my own Shame, and God's Glory; and as an Occaſion to bleſs him for his reſtraining Grace, keeping the Principles of my Education ſo faſt about me; like ſo many Weights, to prevent me quite breaking looſe into Extravagancies.

But after all, thro' Careleſneſs of the Occaſions of Sin, being full of Self-Confidence, I fell into Snares; and one Step prepared for another, till by degrees the Gap grew wider, to let in the wild Boar, to ravage and deſtroy: God often flaſh'd Terrors in my Face, in his providential Dealings, but I ſaw not his Hand: Particularly in reading *Caley* of Eternity, ſome

Paſſages were ſet ſo home, as to rouſe and terrifie me for a Seaſon; they faſten'd not ſo powerfully, as to be a conſtant Barrier, yet they did me great Service: Many wear out the Force of their Education, till it becomes a Curſe to them, rendring their Guilt more notorious, provoking God to retire the farther; and that it was not thus with me, is owing to a better Principle than my own. God gave me two remarkable Deliverances again; which with all Gratitude and Humility, I mention to his Praiſe. Oh the vaſt Pity and Patience of a Holy God towards a provoking, helpleſs Worm! *What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his Beneſits conferr'd upon worthleſs* me, *from Time to Time? O let my Soul bleſs Thee, and my Life praiſe Thee, that have ſo much diſhonour'd Thee: ever ſince I hung on my Mother's Breaſts, have I hung on Thee; Thou art my God from my Mother's Belly; let my Praiſe be continually of Thee.*

As I advanced in Years, I met with more Trouble: God was pleas'd often to check me in the Courſe of his Providence. A Diſtemper threatned, which affected me with a mighty Concern, ſtill fearing the worſt. I began now to reflect more ſeriouſly upon the Vanity and Uncertainty of all Things, but diſtruſted too much his Providence; fearing, inſtead of relying and reſigning; and yet tempted it, moſt preſumptuouſly, in other Caſes; which expoſed me to many real Dangers, and needleſs Fears: Reſignation to the Will of God, is no leſs a Privilege, than a Duty, as every

very one will find, that makes the bleſſed Attainment: 'Tis a begun Heaven in the Soul, and makes it calm, amidſt all outward Storms; but he that repoſes not his Truſt and Confidence in God, muſt owe very much to his Stupidity; if his Fears are not as boundleſs as his Fancy: He that fears not as he ſhould; is juſtly puniſh'd if he fear, where no Fear is.

All this while I kept cloſe to publick Worſhip, and ſecret Duties, in which I was conſtant, tho' too cold and formal, eſpecially upon every Lapſe, which I very ſenſibly obſerved. I habituated my ſelf to ejaculatory Prayer, with which I was much delighted; but found a Deadneſs on my Spirit, whenever I fell by any Temptation, preſuming on the Strength of my Reſolutions; ſeeking rather than avoiding Temptations, and tampering boldly, with the Occaſions of Sin. This is tempting the Devil, to tempt us, and God to depart, as to my Sorrow I found it; let others take Warning, leaſt they pay dear for their Experience: *Can a Man take Fire into his Boſom, and not be burnt?* Where there's Powder, Men fear a Spark. About this Time Satan haunted me with hideous Injections; but reading Dr. *Sibbs*'s *Bruiſed Reed*, the Counſels of that holy Man were bleſs'd for my Relief; and for the preſent, proved a Shield againſt thoſe fiery Darts; but freſh Guilt diſarm'd me, and gave the Enemy Advantages, which he improved to my Terror; I rather compounding, than reſiſting him ſtedfaſtly by Faith.

I can't but here take notice of the Juſtice of God, in permitting this kind of Puniſhment, for my wretched Neglect of Watchfulneſs, againſt Temptations that often foil'd me: Since I kept not my Guard at the Poſt of Duty; 'twas juſt with him to give me up to the Drudgery of ſuch, as were fooliſh and vexatious. Let all thus harraſs'd, ſearch their Hearts, and ſee if ſome unmortify'd Luſt be not the Cauſe of this Trouble; which if they find, and ſacrifice, they may hope the Storm will ſoon blow over: In the mean while it's better to fight, than fly; to deſpiſe, than fear; he tyrannizeth over the Fearful; but ſneaks to the Brave, and Reſolute: Where Guilt is not at the Bottom, this Method ſucceeds, by God's Aſſiſtance; but that baffled me, in all my Attempts, and encouraged him in his Onſets.

The black Thoughts that purſued me, put me upon dangerous Diverſions; I ſtuck at few, that were not palpably groſs; ſtriving thereby to eraſe thoſe troubleſome Idea's that obtruded themſelves in Solitude upon me, if not well employ'd; which my Irregularities, much indiſpoſed me to: But when I reſolved to take up my Reſt in God, I found my Spirit freer, and devout Exerciſes comfortable: But, alas! thro' the Heat and Precipitancy of Youth, I broke looſe again, and my Troubles recurring, I ran upon any Project, I thought might turn the Stream of my uneaſie Thoughts; and now I came ſo near the Brink of the Precipice, that my Feet were ſlipping, and nothing

nothing but God's immediate Hand prevented my Fall and Ruine.

O my inexcuſable Folly! to forſake the Fountain of Bleſſedneſs, for impure Streams, and broken Ciſterns, after ſuch repeated Trials, ſucceſſively of both! Lord how low, how very low, is thy fallen Creature ſunk! *Lord, what is wretched Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou ſhouldſt regard him!* O ſtrange Unworthineſs! O amazing Condeſcenſion, and Patience! God warn'd me now by the Death of many, how uncertain my Life was, nay, came cloſer ſtill; ſome Symptoms of the Malady that ſwep away ſo many, faſten'd upon me, and ſtruck me into a mighty Conſternation; but, alas! God removing ſpeedily the Danger, Security crept upon me. I look'd to ſecond Cauſes; too little to the Hand that threaten'd, or deliver'd; like a ſtupid Wretch, unaffected with Frowns or Kindneſſes.

Let all thus tardy, cloſely apply this to themſelves; let them know, they may as ſoon run from themſelves as their God; that nothing can befriend them, while he is their Enemy; nor comfort, while he frowns: If they neglect his Favours, and Reproofs, they ſhall ſeverely ſmart for it, firſt or laſt: Idle Excurſions, vain Diverſions, or what's worſe, may give a temporary Relaxation; but if God intend them good, they'll find their Troubles recur with Force; as a Current dam'd up a while, ruſhes with redoubled Violence, the Obſtruction once maſter'd. While you run out

out of God's Way, you fly the only Center of Reſt and Safety; and if in a ſinful Courſe you find ſettled Eaſe, and Pleaſure; at the long run, you'll ſee it one of the ſoreſt Judgments: The only ſure Way to Peace, is, entirely to quit your Luſts.

I muſt do my ſelf this Juſtice, (tho' otherwiſe, God knows, bad enough) as to own, I allow'd not my ſelf in any evil Courſe; but upon every Fall, immediately reaſſumed Reſolutions of Amendment: I obſerved every Breach of my Integrity, made way for another, by which the Tempter had eaſier Acceſs to draw me aſide: But the Miſery of all was, tho' I pray'd and ſtrove too, yet the Preſumption of my own Strength, to grapple with Temptation, made me an eaſie Prey to the roaring Lion. The frequent Experience of my Weakneſs, did not drive me out of my falſe Confidence: but I ſtill reſumed Hope and Courage, tho' I put to Sea in a crazy Bottom: And this made my Obſtinacy inexcuſable: My impure Heart cauſed me to pray formally; but as much as I drop'd ſhort of Intention in that Duty, ſo much I exceeded in Self-Dependance. Watchfulneſs and holy Reſolutions, are glorious Duties, and ſtrengthen each the other, but ſhould ever be done in the Strength of Chriſt, and his holy Spirit. I had the Notion, as many have, but not the Thing, the practical Senſe; for where that is, it breeds Caution, with reſpect to the Occaſions of Sin. I'm perſwaded God ſuffer'd me

me to be baffled, to open my Eyes in this Point, but ſtill I would not ſee.

Let all therefore ſuſpect themſelves in this Matter, it being a Diſeaſe ſo natural: 'Tis in the Beſt, but reigns in the Worſt; and would to God, I was more clear of it. 'Tis ſtrange to ſee ſuch as do leaſt, preſume they can do moſt; and the moſt holy, humbly confeſſing their Weakneſs: But the Wonder may ceaſe, when we conſider, Pride and Ignorance is the Root of all Self-Confidence. I ever found this ſubterfuge very prevalent, and a great Snare to me: *viz.* that Faith and Repentance, would lick all whole again; this led me into the ſad Circle of Sinning, and Repenting; the which many run all their Days, till they tumble into the bottomleſs Pit: And 'twas God's Mercy alone, prevented my ſad Fate; which I deſire to acknowledge with a thankful Heart. When I ſay theſe Suppoſitions embolden'd me to Sin, it muſt be underſtood, of the Streſs of a Temptation, not as the Reſult of my cool Thoughts; for my ſtanding Meaſures of theſe Things were quite otherwiſe.

Happy is the Man that practically underſtands theſe three bleſſed Duties; of Watchfulneſs; Prayer; and Dependance: Such a one will ſeldom be foil'd; for God certainly will be found of one, that thus diligently ſeeks him, in his own Way. He that redoubles his Watch, may pray in Faith, to derive down Supplies, in every Exigency; and in the Strength of them, expect aſſured Succeſs, ſince God will ful-

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fil his Promiſes. True Prayer, is the Voice of the real Deſires of the Soul; the Man then that thinks his own Care ſufficient, is like to have little of theſe; and will be too ready, if he ſucceed, to ſacrifice to his own Net: If ſuch a one then proſper, God muſt loſe his Glory, which he never did, nor will: We may gueſs then at the Fate of ſuch a Perſon, who uſually miſcarries in his Attempts; but if he reform outwardly, his Heart is little changed, but rather ſwell'd with Pride.

To be careleſs under the Pretence of Prayer, and Dependance, is to abuſe our ſelves, and offer the greateſt Indignity to God: Is it poſſible to deſire any thing earneſtly, and ſit ſtill, without ſuitable Endeavours? The natural and uſual Method of Mens Procedure in this kind, demonſtrates their Hypocriſie, and upbraids the Folly of their ſlothful Pretences. We run naturally from Dangers, and embrace Opportunities for great Advantages: We endeavour in all theſe Caſes, as well as pray, and depend on God's Providence. *Work out your own Salvation, with Fear and Trembling; for it is God which works in you to will and do of his good Pleaſure. Watch and pray,* is the Advice of our dear Lord and Maſter: He that watcheth not, can't pray, but formally, and his Dependance is meer Preſumption. Bad Men fail of making good their Reſolutions for want of an inward Principle, and good Men too often, for want of Dependance.

Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Formality in Religion is our Ruine: Had I read the Holy Scriptures, with that Seriouſneſs I ſhould, I had ne'er err'd ſo fatally; but better underſtood theſe great Duties, their Grounds, and Relation, each to the other. He that really makes this Attainment, will find himſelf no mean Proficient. *Eraſmus* tells us from his own Experience, 'That there's little Good to 'be got, by reading the Scriptures curſo-'rily and careleſly; but he that exerciſes 'himſelf therein conſtantly and conſcio-'nably, ſhall find an Efficacy in them, as is 'not to be found in any other Book 'whatſoever. Obſerve my Failings in theſe Points, and what my Folly coſt me, as will appear hereafter.

I Travell'd now abroad, where I eſcaped many Dangers; and in my Paſſage home, a very remarkable one: In the midſt of the Storm, I form'd a Reſolution, ne'er to forget the Mercy, if God would ſpare me; but I ſoon baſely forgot it, and ne'er ſolemnly remember'd it, till God awaken'd me by his Judgments: I pray God lay not this Sin to my Charge: O the amazing Goodneſs of God! and the vile Ingratitude of my hard Heart! I had not been here long, but I fell into Apprehenſions my Body was in a declining Condition; and the Danger my Soul was in, then naturally fell under Conſideration: The Anxiety of theſe forebodings, brought me low, and made me very ſerious: Then God brought to my Mind, the good Counſels I had ſlighted, my Obſtinacy and Forgetfulneſs of him,

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and my beſt Intereſt; I was now fully convinced of the Vanity of the World, and the fooliſh Projects I had ſet my Heart upon; I was at the old Game of fair Promiſes, and good Reſolutions, if I recover'd; tho' God knows, they proved too much like his, that vowed a Taper as big as the Maſt in the Tempeſt, to the *Virgin Mary*; but when a-ſhoar, put her off with a Ruſh-light.

Conſider this ye that forget God, and your ſelves; your own Promiſes, and his Deliverances: remember the Vows made in your Diſtreſs: *Vow and pay unto the Lord; for he has no Pleaſure in Fools.* Obſerve what this piece of Forgetfulneſs coſt me, when God brought me to a cloſe Reckoning, as he will you, ſooner or later: The keener your Deſires, the ſtronger your Vows; and the ſweeter were your Mercies, the more fiercely will your Conſciences one day ſting you, with Reproach, when he awakens them; and the longer he forbears you, the more ſeverely will he handle you: Bethink your ſelves therefore betimes, and prevent the Storm.

The firſt time I was preſs'd hard with Trouble of Mind, was a little before I left *England:* That which brought me to Extremity, was this Expreſſion of a Friend: *viz.* That we no where read in Scripture, of any that fell into the ſame Sin, after they had truly repented of it: God ſtrangely ſet in with it, to humble me, and after much Struggling I got over it. I have often thought this Advice might have been ſpared,

red, at ſuch a Juncture, when I was low enough, and needed rather Support, than Severities to deject me; but God was wiſe, and good in permitting it, and carrying me thro' the Terrors that follow'd; both, I hope, did me Service, tho' I made not the Uſe of them I might and ought.

The Obſervation I think is true, and let ſuch as make a Trade of preſumptuouſly Sinning and Repenting, apply it to themſelves: Such as wilfully and habitually, keep up that Cuſtom, ne'er repented in earneſt; and if they go on Jeſting, they'll ſhortly meet with ſomething that will put them paſt trifling: But let no honeſt Heart, that may fall in an Hour of Temptation, miſapply it: 'Tis a uſeful Conſideration, to keep any from Falling; but by no Means to drive them from their only Remedy: No doubt Inſtances might be given of ſuch as have fallen into the ſame Sin, after Repentance; however, that which drives from Chriſt, Duty and Safety, muſt be a Temptation from the Devil. In Storms of this kind, it's ſafer to take up with preſent Evidences, than puzzle our Heads with what's paſt and doubtful in ſo cloudy a Seaſon; beware now of too haſty and ſevere Concluſions.

I fell now into Temptations about the unpardonable Sin, back'd with ſome terrible Expreſſions in Scripture: Theſe harraſs'd my Thoughts exceedingly, and left me no Hole to creep out at, to eaſe the Anguiſh of my Mind. I kept all to my ſelf, gave no Vent to my Diſtreſs, by imparting my

my Caſe to any; which naturally gives ſome Eaſe, and is certainly a great Duty; a means God often owns, by Bleſſing it with Succeſs: Woe be to him that is alone in this State: it has been the Ruin of many, who have been overborn for want of ſeconds. Let none therefore make light of this Warning, and preſume they can grapple alone with Temptation. The ridiculous, ſtrange, horrid appearance of ſome Suggeſtions, makes many aſhamed or afraid to expoſe them, leaſt they ſhould themſelves: but let ſuch conſider, that's many times the ſtrongeſt part of the Temptation which often vaniſhes upon a diſcloſure, at leaſt, is moderated: ne'er fear manifeſting the Attempts of the Devil; and honoring God by uſing proper means: impart all to an able Miniſter, or ſome pious, faithful Friend, and that without delay, before the Temptation faſten. The Rule holds univerſally, in all ſorts of Temptations: to diſcloſe them, is in part to weaken them; to ſuppreſs them, is to redouble their Strength, our Sufferings, and Danger.

What relieved me in great meaſure, was A. Biſhop *Tillotſon*'s Opinion about the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt: *viz.* that it was only committable in our Saviour's time, when the Phariſees aſcrib'd what was done by the Spirit of God, to *Beelzebub*, out of pure Malice to our Saviour: but be that as it will, 'tis clear, tho' it ſeem a Paradox, that Man that fears he has committed this Sin, has no juſt reaſon to fear he has: becauſe the Commiſſion of it is ever accompanied

panied with Malignity, and Obduracy; with Hatred of God and Goodneſs, without any diſpoſition, or concern to return to Duty, and ſeek Reconciliation. The Texts that troubled me, as leaving no room for Repentance, ſeem to refer to final Apoſtacy, where the ſame Hardneſs and Averſion is ever concomitant: He therefore that deſires to return to God, after his wandring, has no reaſon to paſs this heavy doom againſt himſelf; but may be aſſured his Lord and Maſter is as ready to receive him, as he is to come to him, in all his appointed means: *He that comes to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*, ſays the Mouth of Truth it ſelf. Awaken'd Spirits raiſe Scruples, where he makes none, and over act the part of ſcrupoloſity, as before they did that of carnal Security; and Unbelief has too great a ſhare in both: *The Whole have no need of the Phyſician, but the Sick*; Chriſt came not to ſave the Phariſaic Righteous, but Sinners: loſt in themſelves; that value a Saviour: and the greateſt are welcome, if but Penitent and Believing. Men make nothing of Sin, while under the Power of it, but once rouzed, and convinced, they as readily think it unpardonably great; and 'tis *Satan*'s great Artifice to let us ſee no Sin, or all Sin; to ruin by Preſumption, or Deſpair: And ſtrangely ſurprizing and amazing is it, to paſs from a State of Inſenſibility, to feel the load of inſupportable Guilt. The only way in this dreadful preſſing Caſe, is, to look up to the true Brazen Serpent, Je-

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my Caſe to any; which naturally gives ſome Eaſe, and is certainly a great Duty; a means God often owns, by Bleſſing it with Succeſs: Woe be to him that is alone in this State: it has been the Ruin of many, who have been overborn for want of ſeconds. Let none therefore make light of this Warning, and preſume they can grapple alone with Temptation. The ridiculous, ſtrange, horrid appearance of ſome Suggeſtions, makes many aſhamed or afraid to expoſe them, leaſt they ſhould themſelves: but let ſuch conſider, that's many times the ſtrongeſt part of the Temptation which often vaniſhes upon a diſcloſure, at leaſt, is moderated: ne'er fear manifeſting the Attempts of the Devil; and honoring God by uſing proper means: impart all to an able Miniſter, or ſome pious, faithful Friend, and that without delay, before the Temptation faſten. The Rule holds univerſally, in all ſorts of Temptations: to diſcloſe them, is in part to weaken them; to ſuppreſs them, is to redouble their Strength, our Sufferings, and Danger.

What relieved me in great meaſure, was A. Biſhop *Tillotſon*'s Opinion about the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt: *viz.* that it was only committable in our Saviour's time, when the Phariſees aſcrib'd what was done by the Spirit of God, to *Beelzebub*, out of pure Malice to our Saviour: but be that as it will, 'tis clear, tho' it ſeem a Paradox, that Man that fears he has committed this Sin, has no juſt reaſon to fear he has: becauſe the Commiſſion of it is ever accompanied

panied with Malignity, and Obduracy; with Hatred of God and Goodneſs, without any diſpoſition, or concern to return to Duty, and ſeek Reconciliation. The Texts that troubled me, as leaving no room for Repentance, ſeem to refer to final Apoſtacy, where the ſame Hardneſs and Averſion is ever concomitant: He therefore that deſires to return to God, after his wandring, has no reaſon to paſs this heavy doom againſt himſelf; but may be aſſured his Lord and Maſter is as ready to receive him, as he is to come to him, in all his appointed means: *He that comes to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*, ſays the Mouth of Truth it ſelf. Awaken'd Spirits raiſe Scruples, where he makes none, and over act the part of ſcrupoloſity, as before they did that of carnal Security; and Unbelief has too great a ſhare in both: *The Whole have no need of the Phyſician, but the Sick*; Chriſt came not to ſave the Phariſaic Righteous, but Sinners: loſt in themſelves; that value a Saviour: and the greateſt are welcome, if but Penitent and Believing. Men make nothing of Sin, while under the Power of it, but once rouzed, and convinced, they as readily think it unpardonably great; and 'tis *Satan*'s great Artifice to let us ſee no Sin, or all Sin; to ruin by Preſumption, or Deſpair: And ſtrangely ſurprizing and amazing is it, to paſs from a State of Inſenſibility, to feel the load of inſupportable Guilt. The only way in this dreadful preſſing Caſe, is, to look up to the true Brazen Serpent, Je-

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ſus, the Bleſſed Son of God, who has more pleas'd him, than we or the whole World have provok'd him: A Reflexion that may give us ſome glympſe of Hope, in the depths of our Diſtreſſes.

After this was a little over, other black Scenes preſented themſelves; whole ſwarms of Idle Fanſies, like the Plagues of *Ægypt*, drove in upon me, and Flie-blow'd all my Sacrifices. Theſe diſcouraged me from holy Duties; miſerably diſtracted me in them; often made me hurry them over; cut them ſhort; or make ſtands in the midſt of them. Thus my Prayers became formal; and Praiſe in a manner ceaſed: When I had any freedom, the ſenſe of my Diſtractions, redoubled my ardency: At length Reading, that had diverted me, as theſe prevail'd, grew burthenſome, ſo deſiſting, my diſtemper'd Imagination made me weary of my Life; Study and Recreations, having loſt all their power to divert In this ſad State I paſſed many Months with little Profit, or Pleaſure; fearful Idea's being impreſſed on my Mind, by the reiteration of theſe undulations of a rampant Fancy: They devour'd that intention of Mind, which ſhould have been employed in matters of my Duty, and Station. The Devil, my Corruptions, and panick Fears, getting this Aſcendant; God mercifully ſupported me, and kept me from the ſad Effects, that often follow. And what ſtill makes it a greater wonder of Mercy, I ran farther from him; who herein had gracious Deſigns of bringing me nearer

nearer: Like a ſick Man that tumbles for eaſe by change of Poſture, I roll'd from one Vanity to another, but ſtill carry'd with me my Diſtemper: God hedg'd up my way thus, to reduce me from my Wandrings, and I, inſtead of compliance, was ſtriving to find new By-paths to run from him: The Center of Reſt offer'd to be my repoſe, but I ſtill follow'd my own Inventions. I ſhall give ſome Specimens of theſe Antick Fanſies, to warn others, tho' I expoſe my ſelf; that they may reſiſt them in time before they get head.

Theſe Whimſies multiply by reception, and over-flow all, if the firſt Breach in the Bank be not made up quickly: Yielding invites them; Oppoſition, or ſlighting them, drives them away: Repentance, Prayer, Reformation of what's amiſs, is a Diſcipline that will tare up by the Roots theſe Tares; without which other attempts may prove fruitleſs. The means of Health, Diverſions innocent and ſeaſonable, have their uſe: but without the former, will not do in many caſes: For however temper of Body, Education, Croſſes, and many other accidents, may render this State complicate; yet ſad Experience has taught me, if *Satan* do not work them, yet he works upon them; and improves them to his miſchievous Deſigns. As our Sins give him Advantages, 'twill be our ſureſt courſe to quit what we can, the Foundation he builds on. This Caſe, tho' ſometimes founded in meer Melancholy, yet I'm perſuaded it often proceeds from ano-

ther Cauſe entirely; and when 'tis purely Natural in its firſt Cauſe; I believe it rarely, if ever, finiſhes its Courſe, without a mixture of Temptation.

I know the learned Speculatiſt, will here drop a ſmile, and pretend wondrous Pity to a Man under the Power of the *Flatus*; and cenſure theſe Sentiments, as meer Deluſions; let ſuch know, I have a truer compaſſion for them, and wiſh they may ne'er have thoſe feeling Reaſons I had, to alter their Opinion; ſome of which they may meet with a little farther, if they dare take 'em at ſecond hand; the cheapeſt, tho' not the ſureſt method of Information. I ſhall therefore diſcuſs this matter no further here, but reſerve it for a proper place, where this, and much more will come under conſideration, if ſuch poſitive Gentlemen can a while ſuſpend their Judgments. To mention a few of thoſe ridiculous Fanſies that troubled me, which make up a Myſtery of Folly and Iniquity.

Signs and Omens crouded in at every Senſe: Whatever Superſtition had rank'd in the number of portentous ſignifications, ſtrangely affected me: The Tradition of Ignorant People, that make Dreams Oracular; Bats and Owls Prophets; Crows and Ravens, portentive of a Carcaſs falling: The howling of Dogs, or digging Holes in the Ground, as Signs of Death: A poor Worm in the Wood of a Bench, or Wall, muſt be a Death-Watch, that clicks diſſolution, with as much evidence as a Paſſing-Bell: The meer Waking Excurſions of

of Fancy, muſt be reputed ſupernatural Impreſſions, foreboding ſome doleful Occurrence. As tho' theſe were not enough to harraſs and conſume the natural Spirits, by continual Agitations, Fancy began to Work without a handle, and mimick Voices in the Air, and Characters upon almoſt every thing; expreſſing ſad diſaſters, diſmal matters relating to Soul or Body, or both; the more to Torment: So that no Galley-Slave was ever handled worſe, than theſe wild Imaginations did me; ever more or leſs obtruding themſelves upon my Belief, which gave Life to all. But I loſt too much time in poring on theſe black Follies, to ſpend any more in deſcribing them. I had paſs'd by all this in ſilence, but for a Deſign of Warning and Relieving others under the ſame circumſtances. Particulars are often moſt Inſtructive, and a parity of caſes may afford ſome help, to ſuch as think their's ſingular, and are ſhy of calling in any Seconds to the Combat; 'tis for the ſake of ſuch, I venture to provoke the Sneer of Mechaniſts; who can ſalve every thing by Matter and Motion, and account ſo, for trouble of Conſcience, and Satan's Temptations.

'Tis eaſy to defie the Winds and Waves a Shoar; and talk of Bravery in a Battle, in a Chimney Corner: Cowards and Sneaksby's, can do this it may be more emphatically, than the Bold and Brave: But ſuch as have been ſorely Wounded, know the Terrors of theſe Adventures; and carry the remembrance of them to their Graves.

Men of Vegete, Athletick Conſtitutions; whoſe Conſciences are as brawny as their Fleſh and Muſcles, laugh at theſe things: But when God in his Providence, by ſevere Afflictions, *&c.* permits an alteration in the Temperament of their Bodies; or lets looſe the Devil to haunt them, with his frightful Suggeſtions; or awakens their guilty Conſciences; they change their Note; mope in a Corner; and fear to lye alone; their Reaſon, Reſolutions, and little Antidotes, all fail. I took my turn of laughing at others, I now heartily Compaſſionate; I reaſon'd and reſolv'd againſt Chimera's, but notwithſtanding, the Stream bore me down, and made me fear, after I had rally'd all my Forces.

I conclude this Topick with Caution to the Fearleſs and Cenſorious; to the Dejected and Timorous. Let the former remember the ſlippery Ground they ſtand on; let ſuch as ſtand take heed leſt they fall; what help or pity can the Proud and Pitileſs hope for in Diſtreſs? Let the Fearful and Tempted, fly all refuges of Lyes, and put their Truſt alone in God, in the regular Uſe of means; let them ſearch their Hearts, try their State, whether Guilt, Impenitence, and Unbelief, be not at the bottom of all, more than Diſtem perature of Body: All other means have been found ineffectual, when this Worm has been found gnawing at the Root of Peace. Innocent People, I mean comparatively, have fallen into this Condition by ſuffuſion of Melancholy, I readi-

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ly grant; but then a little Phyſick removes it: Where the caſe is Stubborn, and eludes the force of long Attempts of this kind, the Cauſe may be ſuſpected to lie deeper. Had I taken the Advice I give, I'm confident I had been ſucceſsful; but Guilt made me fear Dying, and ſo every thing.

Take heed how you give way to Sin, and diſhonor God, by liſtening to Superſtitious Fears: Your Breath and Souls are only in his Hand; Fear and Truſt him alone, and defie the Devil. Fight a-while and he will Succour you, and make you ample amends for bearing the brunt of the Conflict; for your Love and Loyalty to him. See if you have not walk'd in the Vanity of your Minds; taken too great liberty to indulge the Idle frisks of a luxuriant Fancy; or defiled your Souls by acting ſomething ſinful in the dark Chambers of Imagery: Conſider whether you may not read your Faults in your Puniſhment. If any thing of this appear, Cenſure and Humble your ſelves under his Hand, that he may exalt you in due time; as infallibly he will, if you are faithful to Him, and your Selves.

To be kept in Bondage by theſe vain Fears, is ſlavery, more ſuitable to the ſtate of a dark Heathen, than an enlightned Chriſtian. 'Tis to Worſhip the Ecchoes of Fancy; and cringe to cruel Idols of our own making; 'tis to ſtand in awe of what's worſe than nothing; to deny God his Fear, and Soveraignty; 'tis a

piece of fealty to the Devil. God forgive me my Sin and Folly; whoſe Juſtice I acknowledge in ſuffering me to be toſs'd from Wave to Wave of this kind; and that Faculty to prove the Inſtrument of my Torment, that I had let rove at all Adventures, into endleſs mazes of Vanity.

I ran at this time, into Company I thought would divert me: And being warn'd by a faithful Friend, of the danger I was in, from a particular choice I made; the good Counſel was neglected. Theſe very Perſons drew me into a promiſcuous Converſation, which brought our Purity and Reputation into great hazard; and 'twas ſolely owing to God's Providence, not at all to our Prudence, both were not loſt. I mention this to reflect Honor, on the preventing Goodneſs of a Merciful God; to take ſhame to my ſelf, and deter others from making light of the kind Admonitions of their Pious and Experienced Friends; a thing too common, but very fatal; and a wonder of Mercy it is, it proved not ſo to me. Be the more cautious here, as their Authority is the greater over you; whoſe Advices carry the force of a Command with them: To reject ſuch, is to add Diſobedience to Folly; and uſually it is as ſeverely Puniſh'd in the courſe of God's Providence: There are ſad Precedents, enough to alarm any that are not perfect Strangers to Conſideration.

The Plague certainly is not more Contagious, than Ill Company; it's Poyſon inſenſibly, ſo the more ſurely inſinuates it ſelf: Beſides this natural diſpoſition, to ſuck in the Breath of corrupt Society, God often judicially withdraws from ſuch, as make theſe bold Adventures, to Chaſtiſe their Preſumption: Thus they loſe the good Principles they had, being over-pow-er'd by the prevalency of thoſe ill diſpoſitions, that at firſt ſeduc'd them, to take pleaſure in ſuch polluting Communications. He that loſes his good Name, will loſe his capacity of doing good in the World; and he that's unconcern'd in that point, is eaten up of brutiſh Self: He that Aſſociates himſelf with Wicked Men, will loſe his Reputation, if not his Innocency: *He that walks with Wiſe Men, ſhall be Wiſe; but a Companion of Fools ſhall be deſtroyed.* Prov. 13.20. How vain is it then to pretend to Purity in Vicious Company? Or to Reform, till ſuch Impediments are quitted? Till this Rule be obſerved, Men are not good in earneſt; nor are ſuch as are Bad, really diſpoſed to forſake their Evil Courſes, whatever they promiſe others or themſelves.

'Tis uſual for Young People, of both Sexes, to Aſſociate for Frolick and Merriment; they may be Innocent in their firſt Deſigns, but can't aſſure themſelves their Practices ſhall conclude ſo. Intimacy breeds Familiarity, till wanton Dalliances commence, which often end ſadly; eſpecially where but Two Perſons engage, privacy giving nerves to the Temptation. I fell into

into the Snare in much Company, and God ſtrangely kept me untainted, even as to my Thoughts; whoſe Goodneſs I deſire to look back upon with wonder, and at my own Folly; who never ſaw my Danger till I had paſt it. Dread theſe Projects, as you would taking Fire into your Boſoms; if you are not Conſumed thus, yet you may be Scorch'd: I was loth to take this Advice on truſt, but wiſh'd moſt paſſionately ſince, I had; when in after Adventures, I expos'd my ſelf too boldly in the ſame way.

Abſtaining from all appearance of Evil, and following things of good Report, are Apoſtolical Injunctions; little comporting with theſe kind of Practices. And ſuch as plead for, or allow them, would be hard put to it, to comment fairly on theſe, and many more Texts in Scripture. *Job* made a Covenant with his Eyes, againſt all roving Looks of this kind: How tardy then muſt ſuch needs be, who throw open all avenues of the Senſes, to tranſmit Poyſon to the Soul? Theſe Aſſignations, or what elſe you call them, of this Tendency, are juſtly cenſur'd by the Verdict of all ſober Judgments: And were not the thing ſimply diſallow'd of in the determination of the beſt, yet the ill conſequences more or leſs in theſe Caſes render them very Criminal.

How many engage their own, and others Affections, by theſe raſh Intimacie's, to the Prejudice, if not the Ruin, of one, or both? Frothy Diſcourſe, Vanity and Flattery, is uſually the Life of the Converſation, if not much

much worſe: Much precious Time is ſpent, and diſpoſitions wrought for the loſs of more, till a Habit of Idleneſs and vain Frolicks, conſummate the Miſchief: Thus all ſerious Thoughts and Deſires languiſh, the Affections grow looſe and carnal, diſreliſhing God, and Spiritual Objects: This is generally the beſt of theſe Converſes. 'Tis very difficult to keep the Imagination and Heart undefiled, and great Impurities have follow'd; this is the natural courſe of theſe Adventures, and when otherwiſe, it's owing to God's Care, not our own; and we have no reaſon to expect ſuch Merciful Preventions in our Rambles; but the contrary, to be given up to the ſwinge of our Corruptions: Which, as it ſhould teach us to adore the condeſcentions of a gracious God in his Interpoſitions; ſo to admire our own Folly, in venturing to undo our ſelves, and provoke ſo kind a Maſter.

The ſenſe of my own Danger, and God's Goodneſs, in Steering me over theſe Sands, has engag'd me to ſay the more on this Subject: And ſuch as will not be advis'd, but frame Excuſes, will one time or other have their Eyes opened by their own Experience. If any demand a Latitude to conſult the Tempers, and agreeableneſs of Perſons by theſe Familiarities, in order to Marriage: If this be a real Plea; what has been ſaid, was ne'er intended againſt it; If meer ſhift and pretence, as many times it is; it's a ſtrong Temptation; and as the Hypocritical pretext redoubles the Guilt; ſo it may

the Puniſhment, in a judiciary way, one time or other.

Others are ready to Reply: We have no propenſity to Lewdneſs; our Conſtitutions, or the regular Diſcipline we are habituated to, put us out of danger. Neither Natural Diſpoſitions, nor Moral Attainments, can ſecure us, out of the Path of Duty: Theſe alone do not render us abſolutely ſafe at any time; much leſs in our Wandrings, as many have found to their Coſt at laſt; who ſtood, it may be, ſome ſhocks of Temptation; and thought themſelves out of Danger; meaſuring their Stability by what is paſs'd, or preſent. He that truly loves Purity, avoids the Occaſions of Sin, as he would all approaches to Infectious Places: God's Grace alone is our Security, which we forfeit, while we tempt his Providence: Whatever have been our paſt Succeſſes, which may render us fearleſs, the critical Minute may come, we may live to Repent of all our Days: Such Allegations have I met with, very angerly maintain'd.

Some time before I made theſe Excurſions; God was pleaſed to bring me into ſuch Diſtreſs, that I apprehended my ſelf near Death: Then did the Vanity of the World appear to me, in lively Colours; and the Excellency of being Uſeful, and glorifying God. Theſe Thoughts made deep Impreſſion upon me, and convinc'd me fully of my Folly, in ſhunning good Employ: But, alas! all ſoon wore off, as the Cloud diſpers'd; and I by no means lived up to the

ſenſe I had of Things, in the Day of Viſitation. Let ſuch as never were under any preſſing Circumſtances of this kind, know aſſuredly, they'll think very differently from what they do in a time of Eaſe and Safety; let them then endeavour to do that Seriouſly and Rationally, that a dark ſerious Hour will put them upon, and make them wiſh they had done ſooner. And let ſuch as have had theſe Warnings, and neglect them; conſider their Danger: They muſt expect ſharper Methods, as I found to my Aſtoniſhment; or if God let them alone without a Jog; the Day is coming he will reckon with them once for all; the Iſſue of which will be moſt deplorable.

About this time, God was pleas'd to ſnatch away an intimate Friend, by a ſudden Stroke: He gave me excellent Advice, and a particular charge to quit the Company I kept; and forbear, eſpecially, thoſe dangerous Aſſignations I engag'd in; for whatever I might pretend, 'twould prove but frivolous. He ſet a high Value on the Miniſtry he had deſpiſed, which indeed deſerves a peculiar Honor, as one of the moſt glorious Employs under Heaven. A little after, I loſt another excellent Friend, who Seal'd this ſhort and Solemn Advice to me, with his dying Breath; *viz.* That whatever I neglected, I ſhould be ſure to keep cloſe to God: Theſe ſerious Admonitions made ſtrong Impreſſions upon me at firſt, but gradually leſſen'd, till in a manner I quite forgot them; which negligence brought a terrible Storm upon me at length,

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that almoſt conſumed me. I wiſh all under ſuch Warnings, would look upon them as the Voice of God; conjuring them to Amend and be Serious; for certainly 'tis no leſs at ſuch Seaſons, tho' Men be the Inſtruments and Organs: The Obligation to Obſervance will be found as ſtrong one Day, and the Puniſhment of the Neglect as ſevere; beſides the Contempt caſt upon the Serious Pathetic Exhortations of a dying Friend: Some are ſcrupulous to a nicety, about fulfilling the Will of the Dead; as to juſt diſtributions of Effects left to their diſpoſe; and many matters of far leſs concern: 'Twere to be wiſh'd all would be as Conſcientious in Receiving and Obſerving the dying Counſels of their Friends; which lay as juſt a claim to their Regard, as any thing. Their affectionate Concern for their true Intereſt, can't be doubted of; and they form then the trueſt Judgments of things. To reſiſt all this, indicates a moſt Brutiſh Folly and Ingratitude; and firſt or laſt, will meet with a ſuitable Retribution.

Don't halve the matter; and think you take Advice, when you comply ſomewhat, as I did; nor preſume too much of your future Steddineſs, by the Cogency of the firſt Impreſs, which deceives many: But beg of God to ſet it home upon your Hearts, and revive it in his Providence, when it decays: and often ſeriouſly reflect upon it, till it warm your Affections, and rouze you up to a conformity. The want of this proved very pernicious to me, tho' occaſi-

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oned not ſo much by Diverſions, as black Thoughts, and diverted me from profitable Seriouſneſs; and did me incredible Miſchief; though God over-ruled them at the long run, ſtrangely to my Advantage, nothing being impoſſible to him.

Thus dropping my Watch, I affected my old Companions; and God ſuffered them to attempt even to poiſon my natural Affections in ſome particulars; for my unnatural neglect, of the Advice of my Friends: and tho' they ſucceeded not, yet at laſt they ſeduced me, to ſee a Play, and led me into other Temptations; but God kept me. I had an Awe before upon me, and fear'd it as forbidden Fruit; but thus unhappily enter'd; I ſoon found the way thither my Self. By theſe Methods I greatly provok'd God, which encreas'd horrors of Conſcience; and theſe again prepared me for new Attempts, to divert theſe Agonies: and this ſad Circulation muſt have ended dreadfully, had not God been ſuperabundantly Merciful to me. Here lay the Miſery of my Miſtake; I thought to get rid of my Fears and Fancies, by run ning from God; which was only to be effected by running to him: a moſt fatal and common Error. Let others grow Wiſe by my Folly, and keep their Standing by my Falls.

I endeavour'd all I could, to ſhake off thoſe troubleſome Clients, that hitherto moleſted me. I tri'd variety of Company, and went now and then to Plays; but all to no purpoſe: all prov'd but like a

Doſe

Doſe of *Opium*, that ſtupifies the Faculties a while, but removes not the Cauſe of the Diſtemper; ſo after a ſhort Truce of Drowſineſs, the Lion rouzed with more fierceneſs to the On-ſet: nay, many times I felt his Claws, when I thought my ſelf out of his reach; amidſt theſe petty Diverſions. Let others, who for want of Experience, entertain a fond Opinion of theſe treacherous Expedients, take heed how they truſt to ſuch broken Reeds, as not only fail them, while they lean upon them, but pierce them thro' with new Sorrows. By theſe Methods the Seeds of Goodneſs began to languiſh within me; and I grew ſoon into a neglect of Ordinances: Part of the Lords-day I ſpent in Reading a Sermon at home; an ordinary cuſtom, I fear, with many; but very pernicious: For the Man that caſts Contempt upon an Ordinance God has Inſtituted, can't rationally expect a Bleſſing in private; while humor, not neceſſity, makes him abſent himſelf, from Honoring God, by joining in the Publick Service of his Church. Men give themſelves an eaſy Diſpenſation while God calls for Order and Subjection; and they fare accordingly: Were that true, none can be ſure of, tho' they found their Excuſes upon it, *viz.* that they can read a better Sermon at home, than they ſhall hear at Church; I ſay, were they morally ſure of this; yet it's no Apology: For ſhould all run away with this Whim, as there's the ſame Reaſon for it; What muſt become of the Publick Worſhip of God? moſt acceptable

ble to him; who *Loves the Gates of Zion, more than all the Dwellings of Jacob*, Pſal. 87. 2. *Unita vis fortior*: the United Prayers and Praiſes of God's People, when their Hearts and Hands are jointly lifted up together; as the one are more prevalent; ſo the other, prove a more grateful Sacrifice; as they more glorifie him. God's Bleſſing is the Life of our Spiritual as well as Temporal Succeſſes: and he can make a mean Diſcourſe in publick, more profitable, when I attend out of ſenſe of Duty, with hope and dependance; than the beſt in Private, when I'm out of the way of his Bleſſing, and don't eye his Authority. We have this Treaſure in Earthen Veſſels, that the Power may appear to be of God: He that depends only upon means, tho' regular, will find himſelf miſtaken; much more will he that's irregular in his Choice and Dependancy both: Let all therefore repute Suggeſtions of this nature, as Snares and Temptations. If they'll trace theſe pretences home, they'll find Lazineſs, or a ſecret loathing of the Word of God, at the bottom of them: and no wonder the full Soul loaths the Honey-comb; and ſuch as have loſt their Appetite, play with their Meat: I have ſaid the more, becauſe I think this, tho' a common, yet no ſmall Fault.

I loſt ground by this Practice, tho' I ne'er dar'd to Prophane any part of that holy Day; no, not at my worſt ſtate. Here the Principles of my Education ſtuck cloſe to me, and did me great Service.

Let this Succeſs encourage all that have Young ones under their Charge, induſtriouſly to inlay them with good Principles betimes. Spiritual, ſearching Diſcourſes, I did not ſo much ſavor, as meer Moral Doctrines; tho' God knows too Immoral my ſelf: The fond hopes I conceived of the Strength of my good Reſolutions, render'd them grateful. *Seneca*'s Morals, *L' Strange*'s Comment on *Æſop*, I doted on; and read them on the Lord's-Day, with wondrous delight. Reading one Day, a Book Entitled, *Religious Perfection*, treating of the Love of God; and ſetting the Mark of it too high, for my reach, it alarm'd me; but inſtead of Prayers and Endeavours, to wind up my Soul to this Standard, I did, as many I fear do, make the Doctrine ſtoop to my Corruptions, by ſuppoſing the Author carry'd the matter too high; that ſuch Expreſſions did not ſo much relate to the Eſſence, as the Perfection of Love: and little or none of that Sacred Ambition being in my Heart, I ſoon baffled the Suggeſtion. *The Saints Everlaſting Reſt* frighted me ſo much in Reading a few Pages, that I threw it by, not caring to meddle with it after, till I came to my ſelf; a piece of Folly, I have heard others were guilty of before me.

Dr. *Lucas.*

Theſe were black Indications of the Unſoundneſs of my Heart. Where the holy Fire, of the true Love of God, burns bright, it grieves it burns no brighter; and deſires the Flame may advance, till it be entirely offer'd up a whole Burnt-Sacrifice,

fice. The nearer we thus approach God, the faſter we ſtill move towards him; as every thing moves the nearer its Center. Faith ſhews us the amiable Perfections of God, which enamor the Soul; and the ſtronger that grows, it brings down the more Oil, to feed thoſe Seraphic Flames, till they lick up and conſume baſe, low, narrow Principles; till corrupt Self expire in the Love of God. Sincere Love, is no doubt accepted, tho' it come not up to this Perfection; a Spark of Fire, is as truly ſuch, as the greateſt; and a Bleſſed Promiſe is made, even to *ſmoking Flax*; the Effect appears, while the Cauſe lies hid, rak'd up in Aſhes: As the leaſt Spark, has the true Properties of Fire, ſo where the leaſt true Love of God is in the Soul, tho' conceal'd as a Spark in Embers, yet it carries with it the genuine property of Divine Love; extenſive Wiſhes and Deſires. He then that feels none of theſe impatient Sallies, no glowings towards a Flame, but contents himſelf with Attainment; and deſires the Notion of Love may be carried no higher, but ſmoother in the Aſhes, has reaſon to ſuſpect, his is more Glow-Worm Heat, than that of true Fire.

It may be ſaid of him that dreads a trying ſearching Book, that he is loath to have his Wounds ſearch'd; and ſo is like to die of them, in a ſhort time. A Sore is eaſily skinn'd over, while it remains unſound at bottom: Some affect none but ſuch as Propheſie ſoft things; *Which ſay to the Seers, See not; and to the*

Prophets, Propheſie not unto us right things; ſpeak unto us ſmooth things, Propheſie deceits, Iſai. 30. 10. They fear not Death, if they may enjoy the Pleaſure of being tickled into it. Men deal not thus barbarouſly with their Bodies, but venture Pain for Health; will ſuffer Cauterizing or Amputation, to ſave Life or Limb: and yet will venture Eternal Torments, rather than not ſit ſoft and eaſy here; as if true Peace of Conſcience, and the Hopes of Eternal Bleſſedneſs, were not able to recompence the Terrors of an awaken'd one; and the Pangs of the new Birth. Where this temper of Mind reigns, it's a ſure Sign of a Rotten Heart: as ſure as Delight in the moſt Rouſing and Spiritual Truths, is of an upright renewed Soul. He that deſires to know the true State of his Caſe, is in earneſt to have it mended, and ſo far is ſincere: And he that's beſt pleaſed with the moſt refin'd and ſpiritual Truths, it's a Bleſſed Sign he has a counter-part in his Heart; a ſpiritual Senſory, to perceive ſpiritual Things, only ſpiritually diſcerned: For this reaſon, the natural Man can't diſcern them, we are told, 1 *Cor.* 2.14. tho' Learned and Moral; for they are Fooliſhneſs to him: but the Spiritual Judgeth all things: as it is added in the 15th verſe. Some Speak and Write, as if the Doctrines of the Goſpel were upon the ſame level with the Precepts of *Pythagoras* and *Epictetus*; and Chriſt and his Church were no more a Myſtery, than a Philoſopher and his Scholars; accounting any

Doctrine

Doctrine a Peg above a meer Moraliſt, meer Enthuſiaſm, Myſtick Cant, and unconceivable Nonſenſe. I here implead my ſelf, and ſtand firſt in the Front, to do Penance; let none then be offended, but let all that forget God and themſelves, in any of theſe reſpects as I have, ſeriouſly conſider theſe things, and what follow.

Going on at this rate, I intermitted the Sacrament above a Year, and had dwindled quite into ſecurity, I fear, had not God ſuffered Melancholy, as I then reputed it, to prevail and agitate me with ſtrange unaccountable Fears. He ſeem'd now to abandon me, and leave me in the very Mouth of Temptation; I was accoſted with ſuch, as I ne'er felt before, even to Infidelity; ſuggeſted to me by an intimate Acquaintance; one of ſtrong Parts: But as bad as I was, God kept me in this Point impregnable; which I mention to the glory of his Free Grace, tho' a Rebel againſt him, and a Coward in his Cauſe. I rejected his Propoſal with Contempt and Silence; he had mettle in a bad Cauſe, and I wanted it too much, in one of the beſt. But at another time, when he ſpoke ſome ſlighting Words of the bleſſed Sacrament, in the Preſence of ſome I thought he might injure; God help'd me to ſet upon him with Zeal and Courage, ſo as to ſilence him. This poor Gentleman ſeem'd to be under the Power of very different Impreſſions, at ſeveral Seaſons; at one time he would vent Sceptic Principles, in his Frolicks and airy Moods; in

his Afflictions, often expreſs himſelf ſeriouſly: He ſeem'd by what fell from him on a ſudden in Converſation, to be under ſtrong Conflicts, between Convictions and Unbelief: the one appearing more in Adverſity, the other in his Proſperity.

He gave me ſome very pregnant Inſtances of Apparitions, where he himſelf was both an Eye and an Ear-Witneſs of ſome ſtrange things that paſs'd. I had, God forgive me, but feeble Notions of the great things of Religion, at this time, and it cauſed ſome melancholy Apprehenſions, when I reflected on my negligence and unfaithfulneſs to him. But God is Wiſe and Good, while we are wanting to our Duty; and intends us good while we deſert and betray his Cauſe, out of the ſuperabundancy of his unmerited Grace; which ſhould make us adore him, and hate our baſe ſelves. Had I enter'd the Liſts oftner, it's probable he might have endanger'd me at ſuch a Seaſon; and I done him no Service. However God might juſtly refuſe me the honor of pleading for him; and the other the benefit of ſuch a faithful freedom; and that in anger to us both; for our heinous Provocations of a different kind.

I ſhall end this Digreſſion in a word about the Death of this Gentleman. He was very well in the Evening, and fell into a Diſcourſe of ſome Atheiſts: He Inſtanced in *Hobbs* and ſome others, concluding thus, they are gone to their place:

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The next Morning he fell Ill, and dy'd in few Hours: He had ſmall Warning; and his Caſe admitted of little Reflexion. Some good Uſe may be made of theſe Paſſages if they be duly weigh'd; the inducement prevalent with me to inſert them, together with the Contexture of ſome Actions of my own, that ran parallel.

Hence learn, what a peculiar ſpite the Devil has at the holy Sacrament, while he employs his Factors to run it down, all they can. We may be ſure that's highly uſeful, he ſo much maligns and oppoſes: it's dangerous to converſe with ſuch Men, leſt we admit their Poiſon, or contract Guilt, by not duly oppoſing them: To prevent both Dangers, we may ſee the Benefit of being well grounded in the Principles of Religion, and of a conformable Practice: And how true that Scripture is, Luke 16. 31. *If they believe not Moſes and the Prophets, neither will they* believe *tho' one roſe from the Dead.*

While matters were at this paſs, it happen'd I ſtood in need of the direction of an old Friend, in ſome matters of Importance. He took an opportunity, faithfully to reprove me for going to Plays. I took fire immediately, demanding a Proof of their Unlawfulneſs, and inſolently ſtood at defiance with him. He very wiſely and patately let the matter drop; I ſuppoſe, apprehending me not in a Temper to receive good Advice; which made him ſuſpend his Reaſons, till a fitter ſeaſon, which ne'er came; he dying quickly after.

O my Extravagant, Wild, Brutiſh Paſſion, what a precipitate thing is Vice! what a Suffuſion does it bring upon the Mind, that we can't diſcern our own Intereſt, nor the kindneſs of a Friend! which leaves behind it, ſcarce a ſpark of common Prudence, or good Nature; but thruſts a Man upon a breach of good Manners, upon hating and oppoſing his beſt Friends; and loving and admiring his Enemies and Flatterers: How true is that ſaying of the Wiſe-Man: *He that hateth Reproof is Brutiſh:* And how narrowly did I eſcape the juſt Vengeance that follows its Contempt? Such vile Ingratitude! *He that hateth Reproof ſhall die*, Prov. 15. 10. And *He that being often Reproved, hardens his Neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without Remedy.* God himſelf Reprov'd me often, and Friends; and how near I was to Ruine, will appear at laſt. Let Friends reprove, whatever diſcouragements they meet with, but let it be a Word in Seaſon, watch the fitteſt time. He that does it may miſs his End, but will aſſuredly have his Reward. Tho' his Advice ſeem bury'd under the Clods, yet he may live to ſee the Seed quicken, riſe, and fructifie into a Plenteous Harveſt; or it may Spring up when his Head is laid: While he is enjoying the Fruit of his labour of Love, in his pious Endeavours, with the moſt High; his Friend below, may be Reaping the bleſſed effects of his Advice while on Earth.

Prov. 12. 1.

Prov. 29. 1.

Thro'

Thro' the boundleſs Mercy of God, I'm a Precedent of this happy Caſe, as many have before me, to encourage Attempts of this nature: And none prove ſuch faſt Friends, as thoſe do to their faithful Reprovers, that are thus brought to God and themſelves. With what pungency of Regret did I reflect upon my baſe ſelf, when I was awaken'd into a ſenſe of my unkind uſage of my beſt Friends? Whoever you are that read theſe Lines, if you prove tardy here; remember the Day is coming, which will be a Day of Feeling theſe things, as ſure, as 'tis now of Reading theſe Lines; and then if God forgive you, you'll ſcarce be able to forgive your ſelves, when this Odious Crime ſhall appear in its true and lively Colours. *Correction is grievous to him, that forſaketh the way*; but remember ſomething more grievous follows, even Death. Conſider well now the Gripes and Twinges, the fiery keen Reflexions that will one Day faſten and torment thee: When in the depth of Horror and Miſery, thou ſhalt ſay, *How have I hated Inſtruction, and my Heart deſpiſed Reproof?* Theſe Fruits of Diſobedience to the Voice of our Inſtructors, will be found exceeding bitter; paſs'd all thought vexatious; believe it in time. The deeper your carnal Security, the more exquiſitly Tormenting will be your Senſations, when the ſtupid fit is over: You'll take matters of infinitely leſs Moment upon truſt; dread the thought of running this terrible hazard. Reflect ſeriouſly on the

Prov. 15. 10.

Prov. 5. 12, 14.

To be without God in the World, is our degeneracy in full proportion; and to aleniate our ſelves from him, is the greateſt and trueſt Sacrilege. Dr. Which. *pag.* 300. *Vol.* 1.

the forlorn brutiſh State you are in: You can't reject the pious Counſels of your beſt Friends, till you have abandon'd God; which is an Act of the higheſt Injuſtice, ſpringing from the deepeſt degeneracy.

Bethink your ſelves; it's a dreadful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God; if Warnings be multiplied upon you to no purpoſe, the Day is coming, your Plagues will be wonderful. If you have a Spark of Reaſon or Gratitude left, I conjure you by all that's Sacred and Humane, relent at the Intreaties of your mournful Relatives, who would be glad to Weep Tears of Blood; nay, let it out of their very Hearts, would it but Thaw your Frozen Souls. Remember if you go on, the Almighty will be as inexorable when you cry for Mercy, when he ſhall bring *Deſtruction upon you as a Whirl-wind, Laugh at your Calamity, and Mock when your Fear comes.* O that I had the Rhetoric of an Angel to perſuade! O that my Words might carry as much Terror with them, as the reality I once ſuffered, ſtruck into the very Center of my forlorn Soul. But full well I know, neither Angelic Exhortations; nor the moſt pathetic from Men; nor the ſight of Devils, will do the Work, till God ſtrike in with the finger of his Spirit; then the Rocks ſhall melt, and the Mountains become a Plain.

Prov. 1. *Read that Chapter ſeriouſly.*

Lord! ſtir up thy mighty Power and come among us: Honor a returning Prodigal, a weak worthleſs Inſtrument, to awaken

ſome

ſome poor Sinner, for thy dear Son's ſake. *Amen.*

I now was near the finiſhing Stroke; very near ſitting in the Seat of the Scorner, the grand Accompliſhment of Wickedneſs. Falling into Ill-Company, that ridiculed Religion, and every thing Serious; I began to comply with the Humor, ſo far as to laugh with them for Company: Either out of baſe Flattery, and ſordid Compliance, to avoid the Imputation of Singularity; or elſe to quaff away a fit of the Spleen, as I then deem'd it.

This is a great Snare I'm confident to many, that dare not make bold with Sacred things in their own Expreſſions; yet for want of ſerious Recollection and an awe of God on their Spirits, venture to abet prophanity in the manner I did; little apprehending the horrid Provocation they offer the Almighty, in abetting this Curſed Temper, by any encouraging geſture or demeanour: This is not only aſſenting, bad enough; but giving a Plaudite to the Performance, to excite the Humor farther. How dear many pay for ſome bold Sayings of this kind, and others for thus ſharing in their Guilt, is too little thought of; in which frequently there's little Wit, but much ſurprizing Impudence.

Men are not only thus involv'd in Guilt, by partaking in other Mens Sins, but are in great Danger of Learning to liſp after them, till they commence Teachers of Blaſphemy

Blaſphemy themſelves. I'm ſure they provoke God to give them up, and then I know nothing that can hinder it: And this has proved oftner the Caſe of many, than we are ordinarily aware of. An Inſtance of which, I could give in one, who learn'd this Trade, by long liking and laughing at prophane Jeſts. I ſaw this poor Wretch die in great Horror; when the Judgments of God overtook him, as they did very remarkably, he was confounded at the ſight of his Guilt, and made fair Promiſes: Prophanity, as is uſual, drove him down the Stream, into the dead Sea of Impurity; let others take Warning. Our danger lies here; we venture without Conſideration, into bad Company, preſuming upon the ſteddineſs of our Principles: This Self-confidence relaxes our Guard, and ſo for want of Caution, in time we begin to like the Converſe: Impreſſions we at firſt receive with Averſion, grow at length familiar; Fear, Shame, or baſe Flattery, having firſt made us ſheepiſh and compliant: In time, what we like, we begin to practiſe, and ſo on, till the matter grow conſummate. The Pſalmiſt begins his holy Inſtructions with a lively deſcription of this Proceſs. *Bleſſed is the Man that Walks not in the Counſel of the Ungodly, nor ſtands in the way of Sinners, nor ſitteth in the Seat of the Scornful.* 'Tis a gradation very expreſſive of the progreſſive Motion of a Sinner, till he advance to the higheſt Form of Wickedneſs: He that walks with the Wicked,

Pſal. 1. 1.

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is in a fair way to take up his ſtanding Principles, and then take up his ſitting with the Scornful; to banter Religion, and make a mock of Sin, and the Judgments that follow it.

Nothing ſhort of the Power of a Merciful God, could now reſcue me. What can reſiſt his Power and Love, when he thinks fit to diſplay them, in the defence of the moſt unworthy? How did his Patience now run into long-ſufferance! How did the glory of his free Grace, ſhine forth in its Luſtre! What Tears of Sorrow and Confuſion are ſufficient to bewail my Folly and Ingratitude? What Songs of Praiſe? What Obedience? And all other expreſſions of Love and Duty are a fit return to the Almighty for his Mercy, that endures for ever.

As I made haſt to deſtroy my ſelf, my bleſſed Maſter in tender Pity hung the more Weights upon me, increaſing the Load very obſervably, as I did my perverſeneſs; tho' at that time I had no ſenſe of it, but rather fretted at my Diſappointments, that I could not have my Swinge with others, but muſt be cramp'd with uneaſy Thoughts, that imbitter'd all my ſinful Diverſions. O happy Rebukes; welcome you loving Frowns; thrice welcome you merciful Severities. I Worſhip Thee, I Praiſe Thee, I Glorify Thee, O Father of Mercies, for thy great Love in thy Son Jeſus Chriſt, and all Bleſſings deriv'd to me thro' him; particularly for all thy dark and diſmal diſpenſations of Providence

dence ſanctified to me: O produce in me an utter abhorrence of Sin Everlaſtingly.

God now caſt me on my Back, and forced me to look up to his angry Countenance, and at the ſame time to peep by ſerious Thoughts into the horrors of the Pit of Darkneſs. I was confin'd now more to a Bed of Terrors, than any other Diſtemper; tho' all was attributed to the Power of the Spleen, and Remedies were applied accordingly: My own apprehenſions were the ſame. I was encompaſs'd with Amazement, and continually expected Death, and what might follow. In a very few Days I got the brunt over, by God's Permiſſion, before the effect of Medicines could be ſuppoſed to take place, which in Caſes of pure Melancholy, are ſeldom effectual till after a long Courſe; it being a moſt tedious obſtinate Diſtemper, as the Learned very well know.

Sad and Perplexing Thoughts (tho' not in that extremity) ſtill hung about me; and being very Serious, I imparted what moſt troubled me, to a Divine I could be free with. God Bleſs'd his Inſtructions much to my Relief: Tho' my Heart was not right with him, yet he indulg'd me, and relax'd my Terrors, while I purſued any Meaſures pleaſing to him. The imparting ſuch Secrets to a Friend, has a natural tendency to give ſome eaſe, as many have experienced, who have found their Doubts reſolv'd in the very diſcloſing them; eſpecially when acting thus out of a Principle of Duty; Confeſſing their Faults, Honoring the Miniſtry,

niſtry, engaging their Prayers; which united may prevail, when our own alone, may not, as is clear in the caſe of *Job* Praying for his Friends, and other Inſtanſtances in Scripture. 'Tis the nature of theſe Sores to feſter and throb, if they are not opened in time. *Confeſs your Faults one to another, and Pray one for another.* Jam. 5. 16.

I promiſed fair in my Illneſs, what I would be, and do, if I got over it; and accordingly began well, was very Warm and Serious in the Improvement of every opportunity, while my Troubles gave me reſpite. But alas! the ſenſe of danger preſſed me harder than the heinouſneſs of my Guilt, which was one great reaſon, why I retain'd not theſe Impreſſions: For after the extremity was over, I thought to get rid of the remains of my troubleſome Thoughts, by running to my old Diverſions: a moſt pernicious Courſe, which many follow to their utter Ruin. For either God redoubles his Strokes to laſh them home, or at length comes utter Exciſion. Had I now been truly humbled, and in earneſt turn'd to God, I had avoided a dreadful hazard, and ſevere Diſcipline; which I beg all to take Warning by, and ne'er to reſt ſatisfied with a few good Wiſhes in Diſtreſs, but conſider this is the accepted time, the Day of Salvation: *Acquaint now therefore thy ſelf with God, and be at Peace, ſo good ſhall come unto thee.* But remember, Frights and Fears are but Preparatives to this, not the thing; which muſt be the reſult of ſerious deep Thoughts,

Thoughts, which God now expreſly calls you to. If you trifle or elude the force of this Summons; your good Moods and Intentions will all come to nothing, like the Morning Cloud and early Dew, that ſoon paſs away: So will leave you in a far worſe caſe than they found you, tho' you may make a ſhift to frolick away the Thoughts of it for the preſent.

After this awakening Providence, I reſum'd my former practice of going to the Sacrament; but ſtill interloping between Vice and Virtue, my diſorderly Walk after ſuch Solemn Engagements alarm'd me ſtill more. When the Storm blew hard from this quarter, I preſently caſt Anchor upon the firm bottom of my good Reſolutions. Upon this poor Security, I boldly put to Sea, tho' I often found, they had not been proof againſt the ſmalleſt guſts of Temptation: There ſeems ſomething of this, very incidental to Mankind; learn therefore to ſuſpect your ſelves.

I ran my Head now often into a Play-Houſe, to turn the ſtream of my Thoughts. Plays and frothy Company, tho' diverting for the preſent, yet left me more Sad: nay often in the midſt of my grining Laughs, I felt my Heart heavy; and often Stabs from Conſcience: Yet was I ſo Mad, as to repeat theſe baffled Experiences. The ſcandal and danger of being drawn in, kept me from talking to Masks, as many do, and ſo are decoy'd by the Witchery of that Converſe; contrary to their

their firſt Intentions; which poſſibly aim'd only at a little looſe Talk. But I Riding thus daringly into the Devil's Quarters, was once accoſted by one of them very impudently; which ſtartled me, and fill'd me with wonder at the height of Impudence ſome of that Sex were arriv'd at. As they pretended to Prayers once in a Play; I had ſo much Senſe left, as to turn my Back upon ſuch an act of prophanity. Another time, in the midſt of a Play, I was impreſſed with ſuch horror of Mind, at I could not tell what, that I was forced to leave the Place, tho' I ſtruggled long to ſhake it off; but to no purpoſe; it growing upon me, till I had quitted the Houſe. Theſe Warnings, and many more, I wreſtled with, which I imputed to odd accidents, and fits of the Spleen; ſo bore up againſt them. I ſaw nothing of God's Hand in them, but was ſtupid as to any true ſenſe of theſe things, or their Cauſes, any farther, than as meer Notions floating in my Brain, received by Tradition.

I confirm'd my ſelf in theſe Practices, from the Example of others I had a good Opinion of; comparing my ſelf with others, worſe than my ſelf, I hugg'd a Deluſion as I fear many do: Many other Idle Reflexions I made, to make my ſelf eaſy. Thus beſotted was I, till God was pleaſed to awaken me with his Thunder, which was now haſting apace towards me. A little before the Onſet, I had by one ſtep of familiarity after another, brought my

ſelf to the very brink of the deep Ditch ſo few recover from: Deliverance from which, was as ſtrange, as was my mad Preſumption, in ſo near approaches to ſo great a Danger.

I ſhall add no more, but urge a few plain Arguments againſt Plays: Much has been ſaid on this Topick, with as clear and convincing Argument as the Light, but God knows with too little ſucceſs, Men reſolving not to be reclaim'd: Examples are moſt Inſtructive, and when Men ſee the Judgments of God driving others from their Evil Courſes, 'tis to be hop'd ſome may take Warning. However, ſince my Practice approv'd them, I think it my Duty to acknowledge my Folly, and warn the Careleſs.

The Deſign of them is now notoriouſly tranſpoſed; Virtue's expoſed, Vice applauded in a moſt ſhameful manner; corrupt Nature, and the vicious genius of the Age, need no Provocatives. I ſpeak not to ſuch as have no ſenſe of Danger; ſome ſharp Affliction, or the Flames of Hell, muſt convince them: But to ſuch as ſeem to have ſome concern for their Souls, but would fain comprimiſe matters; enjoy their Humours and hope for Heaven ſtill in Reverſion. I beg of ſuch to bethink themſelves betimes, to Judge impartially, and Act reſolutely; to tare themſelves off with a holy Violence from this combination with Hell, which indeed is the very Mouth of it.

Here many learn to liſp Oaths, till they grow conſummate in other fiendſhip Language; here tinging their Fanſies with the Oratory of Prophane Wit, they commence Maſters of the black Art; to Burleſque the Sacred Oracles, Droll on Sacred things, and Ridicule all Religion: Here Marriage, an Ordinance of God, ſome have ſeen ſo long made a May-game of, and the airy frisks of the Man of the Town, ſet off with ſuch Gallantry; till they look'd upon Virtue, but as an Emblem of Slavery; a Chain for Mad-Men to draw after them; or a Rattle for Fools to Play with; till at length they precipitated themſelves into the Gulph of Libertiniſm. Theſe are ſome light Sketches of the monſtrous Iſſues of this teeming Womb of Iniquity.

The natural tendency of theſe things to Vanity and Wickedneſs, one would think, ſhould awaken a ſober Mind. Let ſuch recollect themſelves, and try if, upon ſerious Thoughts, they can reconcile the Profeſſion of ſo holy a Religion, as the Scriptures advance, to the Patronizing of ſo Impious a Cauſe; as they certainly do while they afford it their Preſence and Support; encouraging the Locuſts and Caterpillers, that devour every green thing in the Garden of Virtue and Piety. 'Twill excuſe none to ſay, they have no ſuch Deſign: Actions have a Voice as well as Words; and were our Intentions good, not ſuppoſeable where this Practice is cuſtomary; yet they alter not the Pro-

perties of Good and Evil. The Nature of things are really what they are, be our Thoughts what they will about them; only we are more or leſs guilty, according to the Degrees of Light and Conviction we have, or might have, had we ply'd the means. But 'tis in vain to talk of good Intentions, while it is notoriouſly known, that Blaſphemy, Prophanity, and Irreligion, are the harmony of the Diverſion: And ſuch as know this, can't be excus'd from giving their implicit Conſent; and the conſequence of that looks too terrible, to be ſlightly paſs'd over. We hear our Friends Reproached and Scorn'd, with great regret; and are ready to Vindicate them, or leave the Company; And can we ſee the Wounds of our beſt Friend tore open before our Faces, all that's dear to him Villifi'd and Diſgrac'd, and all that relates to him brought into the utmoſt Contempt, and be eaſy and diverted all this while? Abſurd unnatural Pretences.

The beſt Plays, as they call them, are acted late on a *Saturday* Night; a goodly Preparative, no doubt, for the holy Exerciſes of the Day following: When Scenes of Vanity and Wickedneſs, ſtrongly impreſſed over Night, are reviv'd with waking Thoughts, and it may be carried in Triumph to the Houſe of God, to affront Him to his Face, unleſs ſloth make them otherwiſe diſpoſe of the Morning. And no wonder if ſuch ſpend the latter part of the Day in Viſits and Diverſions;

verſions; to Chat and Gaze away all important Truths, that ſhould make them Wiſer or Better. I Bleſs God, he ever ſo aw'd my Spirit in my worſt Rambles, that I ne'er broke this Hedge, in frequenting Plays at ſuch a Seaſon; nor Prophaning his holy Day by idle Viſits, or carnal Divertiſements. Too many there be, that tho' they forbear Plays, yet make bold to chat away the after part of this Bleſſed Day without regret. Let ſuch as have pleaded for this, and ſo forwarded the practice, reflect; what Service they have done Religion by putting in their Plea, or which is as bad, their Example, in defending or abetting ſuch hurtful Liberties.

Some have been ſo bold as to ſay, there might be as much learnt by a Play as a Sermon, who would be very angry, if any preſume to call their Religion in queſtion: but I'm ſure that, or their Diſcretion, if not both, are juſtly cenſurable; who dare make an Ordinance of God, truckle to the Devil's Seminary. He is like to make a hopeful Moraliſt, and ſuch as go to his Pupils to School, no doubt, are like to be well taught: Our Gains here can ne'er bear our Charges; the accompliſhments of Art or Nature, will ne'er recompence the loſs of what's infinitely better, Virtue and a good Conſcience. The pretences of Example of ſome reputed good, that frequent theſe Diverſions, is a Snare of our own deviſing, in which I caught my ſelf, and then

found it ſo; the Devil and my own falſe Heart caſt a Miſt before my Eyes, ſo very ſpeciouſly led me into it, which I found very ſtrong and bewitching. How do we know ſuch to be good? Nothing's more deceitful many times, than a Profeſſion or a Character: I'm ſure there's reaſon for ſuſpicion. Do I know what Principles act ſuch a one? What his Sentiments, Knowledge, and Convictions are? What his Aims and Ends? As theſe differ much, ſo may my Caſe from his; God for theſe Reaſons, or others beſt known to himſelf, may ſnatch him as a Brand out of the Fire, while he may leave me juſtly to periſh in the Flames.

We muſt walk by Rule, and Examples ſuitable; but ne'er forſake that, to follow one of Reputation, who receeds from it. We are told by an Apoſtle, one may Eat that ſafely, which another Eating doubtfully, is damn'd if he Eats; becauſe *What is not of Faith, is Sin.* If meer Example won't juſtifie in matters indifferent, how much leſs does it, in what's Dubious or Unlawful? It's a ſad Sight, to ſee bad Men ſtrengthen each others Hands in Wickedneſs; but a much worſe, to ſee good Men Emboldening one another in the Broad-way. Were ſuch as are call'd good, really ſo, they wou'd better conſider the danger of hazarding themſelves, and miſleading a weak Brother, and confirming the Prophane in their Wickedneſs; by giving their Ways the Reputa-

Rom. 4. 23.

Reputation of their Preſence and Aſſent; were this duly thought on, one refuge of Lies would be diſmantled, and one the leſs Corner left for Hypocrites to neſtle their Heads in to nap away the Checks of Conſcience.

My own Folly has put me upon ſaying a little on this Subject, out of a ſincere Deſign to reclaim others. A few Arguments will perſwade the Sincere, when many will not the Obſtinate; but the Day is coming that will. In the mean while let all that have any true ſenſe of Religion, bethink themſelves, learn Wiſdom at others coſt, and take that upon truſt that elſe muſt coſt them dear. It's remarkably to be obſerved, that theſe wicked Entertainments fill'd up the meaſure of my Sins, and ripen'd me for Divine Vengeance; which I'll deſcribe after a few general Remarks made on what's paſs'd. Obſerve then,

1. That nothing is more deceitful than is naturally the Heart of Man, and Sin; the one to inſinuate inſenſibly under plauſible pretexts, and the other to receive the Poiſon under fair ſemblances; and ſo betray us to infinite hazards.

2. This falſeneſs of the Heart demonſtrates the depravity of our Nature; that we are far from being the Creatures God at firſt made us: that it ſhould exceedingly humble us to think, that in our natural State, we are haters of God, and Holineſs: The thoughts of our Hearts *are only Evil, and that continually*: The *Hebrew*

word not only ſignifies the Imagination, but alſo the purpoſes and deſires of the Heart. The Fruit evidently declares the Root: Were we not ſunk low by the Fall, we could ne'er be ſuch Enemies to God, and our beſt Intereſt. Great is the force of Habits; but we find good ones are ſoon loſt, Evil ones with the greateſt difficulty; which plainly indicates our natural Propenſities. Pride is our undoing, Humility our Reſtoration. Let us make then a kindly uſe of this Conſideration, and trace up all the Eruptions of Sin, in our Hearts and Lives, to the impure Fountain of corrupt Nature, which will make Sin appear exceeding ſinful, and conſequently help more effectually to Humble us, which we moſt of all ſtand in need of.

3. That Convictions ſtifled, Advice deſpis'd, Warnings neglected, Vows and Promiſes broken, Providences and Calls of Mercy and Afflictions overlook'd or reſiſted; as they are bright Indications of the plight we are in naturally, ſo they excite God's Wrath, provoking him in the higheſt manner, and make way for the ſoreſt Judgments on this ſide Hell, or utter perdition.

4. That our ſtrongeſt Reſolutions, are no match of themſelves againſt our natural propenſities to Evil, eſpecially when reinforc'd by Cuſtom, and back'd by Temptations from the World, and the cunning Serpent. The Viper in our own Boſoms is enough to deſtroy us, if left to our

our ſelves; how much more fatally, when reinforced with theſe Auxillaries?

5. That he who calls not in God's Grace to his Aſſiſtance, by Serious Prayer, and Dependance; and watches not faithfully againſt the Occaſions of Sin and Temptation, will certainly be drawn in, and overcome; and the ſooner, the greater his Preſumption. He'll fail of executing his good Purpoſes for want of a Principle, the ſpring of the Performance: and if that, where it is, will protect none while ſecure, we may eaſily foreſee what will become of his good Reſolutions, that puts fearleſly to Sea without Helm, Sails, or defenſive Weapons: That has no Principle to guide him; that can neither Fight nor Fly.

6. That we are naturally prone to truſt in our own Strength, and from that Conceit, to ſwell into Self-Confidence; or take up with a meer empty Notion of God's Grace, if we don't deny it; rather as a compliment to God, or the Sentiments of our Teachers; not from a deep ſenſe of its real worth, and our own preſſing neceſſities. And this procedure is a diſcovery of our natural Blindneſs and Perverſeneſs, who after many diſappointments, ſtill adhere to the Idol of Self-ſufficiency.

7. How eaſy is it to miſtake Education, exterior Performances, rounds of Duties, for the real vital acts of Religion? Thouſands are ruin'd this way; it requires then our utmoſt care to avoid this Snare,

Snare, to which we are ſo naturally propenſe: We are too ready to lean our hopes on any Prop, tho' near ſo deceitful, if it will but take off the weight of our preſent Fears, that may hinder our Enjoyments: Great things at a diſtance, little move us; realiz'd only by Faith, a carnal Mind has little of, and cares leſs to exerciſe: no wonder than he contentedly takes up with a ſlender Security, about matters he little values.

8. That without purity of Heart, all the demureneſs of Devotion, and Converſation, is but the ſhining Varniſh of refined Hypocriſie, tending to Apoſtacy: Our chief care then muſt be of our Hearts, which naturally we are moſt incautious of.

9. That one Luſt allow'd, will hinder a ſaving cloſure with *Jeſus Chriſt*, and preclude our Intereſt in his Blood and Merits. If any thing hinder the Cion from a Vital Union with the Stock, it receives neither Life nor Growth; for true Union is the Life of Communication, to derive Sap and Spirit to animate and fructify. *Chriſt* compares himſelf to the Vine, and Believers to Branches, vitally inſerted into him, which makes them living, *John* 15. for want of which real Union, nominal Chriſtians, are there ſtiled withering Branches, like dry Wood, proper fuel for the Fire.

Many other repreſentations there are in Scripture, which expreſs the neceſſity of a vital, real, tho' myſterious Union between

between Chriſt and the Soul of a true Believer. See this fully prov'd in a ſmall piece of that admirable Prelate Biſhop *Hall*, called the *Myſtick Union*, highly worthy of every ſerious Chriſtian's peruſal. But now, one Luſt loved and allow'd, obſtructs this Conjunction; for as St. *James* ſays, He that *breaks the Law in one point, is guilty of all*; which the prevalency of his darling Luſt, would cauſe him actually to violate, ſtood it in his way.

What a ſad State is this, to loſe all the Services we perform, and Pains we take in Religion; yet this is the Caſe if our Perſons are not accepted, which they are not, till united to Chriſt our Head, by true Faith and Love, whereby we dwell in Chriſt, and Chriſt in us; who is *in us the hope of Glory*; dwelling in our Hearts by Faith. 'Tis an Expreſſion of an Excellent Perſon, Arch-Biſhop *Layton*'s Preface to *Serm.* 4. *pag.* 56. "External Worſhip, "openly acknowledges a Deity; but want "of inward ſenſe in Worſhip, ſecretly "denies it: To preſent the Living God "with a Carcaſs of lifeleſs Worſhip, is "to pay him with ſhells of Services, and "ſo to mock him: And it is a more "admirable long-ſuffering in him to de-"fer the Puniſhment of ſuch Devotion, "than all the other Sins in the World. This is the deplorable State of all Formaliſts, who not being Converted, and United to Chriſt by ſaving Faith, have not

not his Spirit, without whoſe Aſſiſtance, nothing is tranſacted acceptably in Devotion.

O the vaſt difference between a holy, and an unſanctified Heart! What awful Conceptions has one of the Perfections of the Deity? What a ſenſe of the Excellency of Spiritual Worſhip, and the Injury and Affront offered a holy God, when any thing beneath it is tender'd him? while the Hypocrite thinks him ſuch a one as himſelf, daring to put him off with a dead Sacrifice, fit only for an Idol; nay, which is worſe, if that can be, confides in this, as the matter of his acceptance. Would ſuch miſtaken People ſeriouſly Read the Scriptures, and ſpiritual Books, they might, by God's Grace ne'er wanting to honeſt Endeavours, detect this deceit of their Hearts in time.

10. What a glorious grace is Faith in Exerciſe? By this we ſee him that is Inviſible, his Providences in the World, and various dealings with our own Souls; this ſets us above the World and baſe Selfiſhneſs: By this, all the Chriſtian Heroes perform'd their mighty exploits mention'd *Heb.* 11. What a mean abject thing, is a Soul acted by Senſe? How does it grovel in the Duſt? How dark and dead to God; and all that's Good or Great? to all his Diſpenſations. When he calls him to Repentance by Providences, Judgments, Afflictions, Terrors of Conſcience he neither ſees, nor hears, but fooliſhly attempts to run from him, by thruſt-

thruſting his Head into Buſineſs or Diverſions; which all prove as Oil to the Flame to ſet the Houſe on Fire: God redoubles his Chaſtiſements, to laſh him home; or abandons him for ever. How unmanly and ridiculous is it to attempt to muzzle Conſcience, a ſpiritual Principle, by the ſhort flickers of Fancy, Jeſts, Quaffs, Intoxications of Wine or Company? Theſe Opiates can but truce the Pain, ne'er Cure the Diſtemper, but encreaſe it; and that remiſſion is dearly bought, that redoubles the Paroxiſm.

11. Sins of Omiſſion affect us not ſo much as thoſe of Commiſſion, tho' as inſeparable as the Shadow and the Body. The Spirit of a Man is always active; if not well Employ'd, it will be in Miſchief. The danger I was in my ſelf, makes me inculcate it with the greater Emphaſis.

12. That the formal Uſe or neglect of God's Ordinances, are reputed a horrid abuſe and contempt of him, and render us obnoxious to his ſoreſt Judgments.

13. That naturally one Sin diſpoſes to another, as it darkens the Mind, hardens the Heart, ingroſſes the Affections; and judicially, as God puniſhes Sin with Sin, by withdrawing his Grace, letting looſe Satan; ſo juſtly puniſhing the wicked freedoms we take, with Vaſſalage to that Tyrant; a drudgery infinitely worſe than that of *Ægytian* Slavery: and he would think it ſo, that was obliged to act any Luſt continually.

Theſe

Theſe are ſome Concluſions I would make for the Uſe of my ſelf and others. 'Tis hard to convince an habitual Sinner, but harder ſtill to drive a Formaliſt, or a meer civil Man out of his falſe dependancies; as well may you perſwade a drowning Man from catching at Weeds and Bull-ruſhes, that help him not, but entangle him, as attempt to unhinge ſuch a Man's carnal confidence. If any ſuch caſt an Eye on theſe Lines, little to be expected; but if Curioſity lead them to ſome curſory glances to ſatisfie that, or their criticizing Humor; I deſire 'em to turn to an Expreſſion of a judicious Divine. 'Tis this, ſpeaking of the Torments of Hell; "One "Hour therein, is infinitely more ſting- "ing and terrible, than all the Tortures "that all Mankind hath, doth, or ſhall "endure, from the Creation to the End "of the World: Then adds concerning the Joys of Heaven; "That one Hour "there, doth incomparably ſurpaſs all "the Delights of this wide World, were "they collected into one lump of "Pleaſure. It appears by his Life and Death, that he was no ſtranger to a more than ordinary taſt of both, and ſuch are the beſt Judges in the Caſe; and ſuch as read his Life, will, I believe, be of the ſame Opinion, and I'm ſure not loſe their Labour.

Bolton's *General Directions, p.* 337.

How difficult it is to impreſs a natural Man, free from groſs Sins, with a ſenſe of his miſerable State and only Remedy, I leave all to judge, that have experienced

perienced the power of Religion; who have obſerv'd the great change in themſelves, and attempt it in others. And for Hypocrites and Formaliſts, our Bleſſed Lord tells us, Publicans and Harlots go to Heaven before Scribes and Phariſees: Conſcience is awaken'd with the guilt of notorious Crimes, while it drops aſleep upon the Pillow of Formality. Precept and Example are moſt cogent, but will not do without a higher Principle: The more need we have ardently to ask God's holy Spirit, who has promiſed it to ſuch as do, if our cold deſires don't beſpeak a denial. That paſſage of our Saviour, *John* 4. 10. ſeems to favour an anſwer even to natural deſires: *If thou kneweſt the Gift of God*, &c. ſays our Lord to the Woman of *Samaria*; *thou wouldſt have ask'd of him, and he would have given thee Living Water*. It will be found another Day, Men periſh for want of asking: Not for want of Means, but Will; which leaves them inexcuſable.

Bleſſed God, what a Wretch have I been! I beſeech thee humbly, for Sweet Jeſus ſake, to cover every tittle of the black Account I have to make to Thee, with his moſt precious Blood; and grant I may entirely be found in him, not having my own Righteouſneſs, which is but as filthy Rags; but the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith in him, in the Hour of Death, and terrible Day of Judgment. *Amen.*

I ven-

I venture to digreſs thus, if poſſible to rouze the Stupid. Thus far have I endeavour'd to traverſe the various Windings of the Subtle old Serpent, with thoſe of my own Heart, thro' the different Stages of my Life, toſs'd with ſo many Storms of Temptations, that often threaten'd to over-ſet me, and muſt, had not a kind hand of Providence continually trim'd the Veſſel: Few were my Halcyon Days, and thoſe commonly prov'd the harbingers of bluſtering Seaſons: But alas! all this while, I little thought from what quarter the Wind blew. I over-look'd Sin, the Wrath of a holy God, and Satan the Executioner; I reſolv'd all into Mechaniſm, the diſorders of the Blood and Spirits; Philoſophiſing on the Subject, as uſually do the Sons of Art. It muſt be ſuppoſed theſe Viſitations took up a Series of many Years, and that I ſtudiouſly omit many things of leſſer note: Very many kind Deliverances, *&c.* with unjuſt returns of neglect I paſs by; chooſing only to mention them in the groſs, to my own Shame and God's Glory.

" ENter not, O Lord, into Judgment
" with thy Servant, for paſt Errors:
" Spare ſuch as confeſs their Faults, re-
" ſtore the Penitent. Cleanſe the Thoughts
" and Affections of my Heart by the In-
" ſpiration of thy Holy Spirit, that I
" may abhor every thing diſpleaſing to
" thee, and ever ſeek thy Honor and
" Glory.

" Glory. Rouze up my Soul to Diligence
" and Activity, who have ſo long loiter-
" ed, and moſt grievouſly provok'd Thee:
" Help me to redeem precious Time,
" worth all that can be thought to the
" dying, and ſuch as are paſs'd hope.
" Lord make me ſeriouſly conſider the
" Golden Sands trickle down apace; that
" when my Glaſs is turn'd, it's for all
" Eternity: Grant I may think of that
" Word, till my Soul fly to the Boſom
" of Chriſt by Faith, that in his Strength,
" the reſt of my Life hereafter may be
" pure and holy; ſo that at the laſt I
" may come to thy Eternal Joy, thro'
" *Jeſus Chriſt*; to whom with Thee,
" and the Bleſſed Spirit, be everlaſting
" Praiſes, one God, World without End.
" *Amen.*

PART II.

Consisting of more material Passages relating to some strong Temptations.

THE surest try'd piece of Armor, is the Shield of Faith, *that quenches all the fiery darts of the Devil*; and the Sword of God's holy Spirit, the Word of God, is the only sure Weapon to repel him; but how shall I persuade the Faithless and Unbelieving? Could I by Words communicate a feeling sense of the Terror of the Battle, I'm confident, I could strike them with Fear and Trembling; but that's quite out of my Sphere, and must come from a higher Hand: However I'll shew them my Scars, that they may conceive the better of the heat of the Action.

Such as have a sense of their Danger, but too feeble, to put them upon their Guard; I wou'd excite to Caution, while they read of the bitter Fruits of my Carelesness; that afforded my malicious Enemy such an opportunity for Triumph. Let such know, tho' winking for a while may hide their danger, and keep

keep off the troubleſome ſenſe of it; 'twill at length bring them with full Sail into the Mouth of it, to their infinite Terror. While we reſiſt the Devil, he flies; but every Moment we drop our Watch, he gains Ground of us; and if he have theſe Advantages long, he's in a fair way to put it out of our power. Be wiſe betimes, for Woe's the Portion of the negligent.

This black and amazing Scene of my Life, is the true occaſion, I give my ſelf and the World this trouble; to which all paſs'd is ſubſervient. I can't ſuppoſe a relation of this Nature, tho' I dip'd my Pen in my Heart, cou'd give a juſt ſenſe of the matter. I know ſuch horrors can only be felt, ne'er to the Life be expreſs'd; no more than a Painter can expreſs Life, Motion, and Senſation, by his Colours: But if one may truſt another's Word, and Experience, it falls as ſhort of the reality of the thing, as painted Flames do of real. What I aim at then is, to give the proceſs of the Temptation; to deſcribe as I can, what might be Natural, and what Diabolical; what advantages I gave the Enemy, and how he improv'd them; how God all along ſupported, and at length deliver'd me. To warn the Bold; Inſtruct and Comfort the Tempted; and by all, that God may be glorified; to whom be all Praiſe for ever.

To avoid all Breaks in this Narrative, I'll relate pure matter of Fact; then make ſome deſcants on Particulars; ſo leave the

Reader to form his own at pleaſure. To which end, I deſire him to read it with ſeriouſneſs; and ſuſpend his Cenſure till he has judiciouſly weigh'd the whole. While the Wrath of God is the Subject, let none preſume to Play with his Thunder-Bolts; nor think themſelves out of their reach: Tho' their Mountain ſeem to ſtand ſtrong, it may fall, after many a ſhock, as mine did. Let others reflect upon themſelves, while I'm confeſſing my unworthy Behaviour to my great Benefactor; unwearied in his Patience to me, a moſt provoking Rebel, inſenſible of his Terrors, and the Riches of his Mercy; ſinning too much as Grace abounded; deaf to all his Calls, but the laſt and loudeſt, able to awake the dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins.

Had he frown'd me into Hell, he had been Juſt, nay, Merciful in ſparing me ſo long; which I here acknowledge in the Face of Angels and Men, to the Honor of his Free-Grace, and my own confuſion. From the very bottom of my Soul, would I thank him for his Diſcipline, eſpecially for his Aids and Supports, and thoſe ſanctified improvements he help'd me to make of them, the thoughts of which, reconcile me to them, as a Child's Portion, therefore to be had at any rate, coſt what they will, tho' others have them on cheaper terms. So far am I from regret, that I ſolemnly profeſs; I would not have been exempted from the Lot, for the whole World, tho' the Trial was long and

ſharp.

ſharp. O the boundleſs Love and Power of God! that can make Light ſpring out of the very ſhadow of Death, and Heaven out of Hell! all glory to *Jehovah* moſt high, for ever. *Amen.*

To premiſe the immediate Occaſion of the enſuing Troubles, which was nothing but what's uſual; *viz.* ſome worldly concern, which producing Anxiety, agitates the Blood and Spirits, till great diſorders enſue, which at length tumbles into troubles of quite another nature. 'Tis needleſs to expreſs what thus affected me, otherwiſe than in general; but it's very obſervable, that a Righteous God made that my Torment, which I doted on, and had abus'd to ſinful Pleaſure: Something of that kind had drawn me from God, into Sin and Danger too too often; no wonder then Divine Juſtice made that the beginning of my Puniſhment. While Temptation prevail'd, and the Waters overflowed my Soul, the Stream was too thick and rapid to make diſcoveries; but when the Flood fell, and all ſettled, I ſaw clearly my Error, and what lay at the bottom of it. I found my Heart vain and Senſual, ſet on the fulneſs and delights of the World; growing on that curſed Root of bitterneſs, Covetouſneſs, which ſprung up without my obſervance. A Vice ſo ſtupifying, that the moſt guilty, ſcarce miſtruſt themſelves: It's ſharply cenſur'd by all, but few eſcape it: We can hate it in others, beholding it pregnant with the Abominations of Rapine,

Oppreſſion, miſtruſt of Providence, and groſs Idolatry, with a large, *&c.* can liberally in a third Perſon paſs bitter invectives againſt it, but with great difficulty ſee it in our ſelves; but guild it over with wiſe and provident Appellations.

I'll endeavour to word every Paſſage, as expreſſive of what I felt, as may be; tho' I fear, the moſt of it will appear to ſome, but as the Illuſions of Fancy; to others, the meer force of Diſtemper; and to all, more or leſs, a Riddle, that have not had ſome experimental feelings of this kind themſelves. The Men of Senſe, as they affect to be call'd, are ready to ſolve all into the power of Imagination, reſulting from the diſorders of the Blood and Spirits, with whom all is Enthuſiaſm, that can't be ſolv'd by Matter and Motion. Too much Learning, or the conceit of it, makes them run a madding this way.

After ſome anxious Thoughts about Temporal matters, the concerns of my Soul came more in View. I found an irreſiſtible torrent of extravagant Fears bearing me down; fearing all fearables, the extremity of Difficulties and Dangers. I endeavour'd to argue my ſelf into better Temper, but found all reſiſtance was as vain, as throwing my ſelf into the Sea, to ſtem the Tide. The Current of my Thoughts I felt invincible; if I oppos'd it, the Waters ſwell'd higher till they broke in upon me, with double force: and while I ran with the Stream,

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I multiplied endleſly black Thoughts. Such preſſing Difficulties indicate the power of Temptation, which ſoon appear'd. I fell now into deep thoughts about the State of my Soul, and found all naught, and which was worſe, ſaw no hope of Recovery: that which faſten'd moſt on my Spirit, was, that I had received the Sacrament unworthily; ſo had eaten and drunk my own Damnation: Much was ſaid to me, as well as what I read in Arch-Biſhop *Tillotſon*, on that Subject, but with little effect: They abated ſomething of the deſperateneſs of the concluſion I form'd againſt my ſelf, but ſtill Horrors haunted me, Sleep went from me, and nothing but Death and Damnation ſtar'd me in the Face.

Some Days paſſing at this rate, I began to fall into great Agonies, which a Friend obſerving, advis'd me to conſult a part of the Works of Dr. *Preſton*. I ſcarce read a Page, but I met with a lively deſcription of ſome Vices, with very ſevere and unwary expreſſions about Repentance; which fill'd me with deſpondency. Now I concluded my State Remedileſs; that God in his Providence pointed me to read my own Sentence, and now had finally Seal'd my doom. Juſtly did God make me ſee his Hand with amazement, who would not ſee it in milder Diſpenſations, which reveal'd his diſpleaſure.

Now was I lock'd up in diſmal Deſpair; my Sins glar'd me in the Face like ſo many Devils; I was Day and Night up-

on the Rack. When I was about to fill my Belly, God threw in the fury of his Wrath; when I thought my Bed ſhould eaſe my complaint, he ſcar'd me with Dreams, and Terrors of the Night; his dread fell upon me and pierc'd my Soul. I was full of toſſings too and fro, wiſhing when it was Morning that it was Evening, and the Evening, that it was Morning. I was a terror to my ſelf and all about me. I was a Fear to my Friends and Acquaintance; and ſeem'd a Butt for the Arrows of the Almighty; the Poiſon of which drank up my Spirit. While I ſuffer'd his Terrors I was diſtracted; I loathed Life, and would have dug for the Grave, as a hid Treaſure; but ſtill as Life was a Burthen, the thoughts of Hell after Death were intolerable: Moſt gladly would I have hid my Head among the Clods, would the Duſt but give me reſt; but full well I knew, Death would tranſmit my Soul to what was infinitely worſe than I felt, or could imagine. In this anguiſh of Heart, and bitterneſs of Soul, I reſtrain'd Prayer before God, reputing him my irreconcileable Enemy.

In this mournful Condition, I endeavour'd to appeaſe the fury of my thoughts, with ſuch kind of Devices as theſe. If I muſt to Hell at laſt; why ſhould I precipitate Life by gnawing Fears, that fret away its thread ſo faſt? Why ſhould I not make as much of it as I can? Life, as wretched as it ſeems, may by ſome relaxation,

laxation, become tolerable; ſome Balm may be found to cure the Wound; or ſome expedient contriv'd to turn the Stream of theſe hideous Thoughts; that ſome had been in as deep a Pit, who yet had been recover'd: However that my preſent Circumſtances were good, compared with the State of Hell, the Completion of all Miſery. But alas! all this was but carrying a Lie in my right Hand; the Edge of my keen Thoughts was turn'd a while, but the Fancy over, 'twas as ſharp as ever: neither Phyſick nor Friends could cure or comfort, nor ſo much as alleviate: The Means I uſed by an overruling Hand, contributed to my Diſtreſs; ſome unforeſeen Symptoms ariſing from their Adminiſtration, which prov'd a Handle to fancy to take hold of, to augment my Miſery: This terminated in abſolute deſpair for Soul and Body, apprehending Death approaching. And now ev'ry cranny of Hope, even the laſt I had, was ſhut up; ſuppoſing Repentance, if poſſible, that it muſt needs come too late: This made me think my Self in the Suburbs of Hell; and how diſmal my State then was, I think may be imagin'd as far as thoughts can reach, without real Experience. How vain is it to attempt to wreſtle out of his Hand? When he ſhuts, none can open.

I found that ſadly true, a faithful Friend had predicted; *viz.* if I forgot God, the Time would come I ſhould tare my Hair for vexation. I reflected on this, with ſtrange

ſtrange remorſe, when I had literally fulfill'd it in the extremity of my Anguiſh; not ſparing my own Fleſh in a Paroxiſm of Indignation, at my extream Folly. I threw my ſelf into various Poſtures, as one deſperate, and at a loſs, how to expreſs the over-whelming horrors of his Mind. In ſome of theſe painful Poſtures, I reflected on the Torments of Hell, and comparing my preſent uneaſineſs with thoſe exquiſite Tortures of Soul and Body; I ſtretch'd fancy to receive the more terrible Forms of Miſery; then adding to all that Hell of Hells, Eternity; I more lively compleated the Idea of that ever-burning Tophet.

One Day as I was paſſionately bewailing my ſelf, a Friend offer'd me a Book, adding good Advice, but alas! I was paſs'd all. When read to, I wreſted all againſt my Self; and when any put a Weapon into my Hand, I turn'd it againſt my own Bowels; eſpecially when terrible expreſſions happen'd, or I dip'd upon them, as I did often to my unſpeakable Terror: For when I met with theſe, I was perſuaded God pointed to my Fate, ſo concluded my ſelf under unavoidable Wrath. This is a uſual, but dangerous Practice with many on the like occaſion; avoid it therefore as a Snare and a Temptation: Sometimes Succeſs has follow'd, but much oftner has it proved pernicious; *Clark*'s *Lives* affords an Inſtance of one that frequently dip'd thus in the Bible, and ſeveral times met with words of Comfort,

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as the Party repeated it; but ſhould any on this Preſumption attempt the like, and miſs the Mark, or hit upon the contrary, the Inference made will be deſperate. Mrs. *Honywood*, after God had wrought a Miracle, to convince her of her unjuſt deſpondency, was much concern'd ſhe had Tempted God by ſuch extraordinary Methods: The way of Duty is the way of Safety: Raſh Appeals and bold unpreſcrib'd Adventures, are bold hazards, that generally ſucceed accordingly.

I ask'd Counſel of Spiritual Guides, before matters came to this extremity, but diſcover'd not the bottom of the Sore, for want of Humility to confeſs my Vileneſs; to give God Glory, by taking ſhame to my ſelf: For this I quickly ſmarted, my Wound was ne'er ſearch'd, but skinn'd over with ſoft Words, which feſtering; God open'd it with a very painful Cauſtick. One Day as I was penſively walking about my Room, I felt ſuddenly darted into my Soul, ſome more immediate Rays of Divine Wrath, as I thought, with inexpreſſible horror; expecting every Minute to be frown'd to Hell. I could not bear up under it, my natural Strength and Spirits quite ſinking under its weight: The extremity of it, laſted not many Minutes, otherwiſe it had abſolutely cruſh'd me, being utterly unſupportable. This drove me, and all about me, to the utmoſt Confuſion, when they ſaw me quite over-born with intolerable pangs of Horror. I ne'er felt any thing like this before

fore or ſince, but once, as I ſhall after relate, and pray God I ne'er may. It ſeem'd directly to affect me, without the aſſiſtance of my own Reflections; for then I made few or none, but was wholly taken up with the aſtoniſhing terror of the immediate Impreſſion; and all my previous thoughts were but ordinary as to kind or degree. I had many times been harder preſs'd by theſe before, nothing of this nature following.

This left me hopeleſs, I ſuppoſing God bore his Teſtimony from Heaven more immediately againſt me, that therefore my Doom was irreverſible: I ſpent the Remains of this Day in dreadful expectations of final Execution, and that ſpeedily: Satan charg'd me with one fiery Dart after another inceſſantly; ſometimes filling my Fancy with dreadful foreboding; ſhaking at other times my Heart with Terror, that brought me into utmoſt confuſion. I miſtook theſe injections for the Notices of God's Will, communicated in diſpleaſure, tho' I expected the Evil Spirit to be the Executioner: The Night I paſs'd much at the ſame rate, in a frightful reſtleſs manner.

Theſe direful Impreſſions ſtuck cloſe to me, at leaſt the ſenſe of what had paſs'd; which I conſtrued as ſure Indications of my utter ruine, which every Moment might be compleated. Many Days and Nights thus ſpent, it pleas'd God to bleſs the Uſe of Opiates in great Mercy; for otherwiſe I believe I could not have held

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out longer, but dy'd I muſt or fell diſtracted. During this diſtreſs, the Divine I lately mentioned, viſited me. I dar'd not, as formerly, to vindicate my Sincerity, tho' I really then anſwer'd him according to the Opinion I conceiv'd of my Self; reputing nothing but groſs Hypocriſie inconſiſtent with it; as Thouſands I fear do, to their utter undoing; but now my proud Plumes fell; I ſaw more of the rottenneſs of my Heart. I was for holding faſt my Integrity, tho' nothing but meer Preſumption, as do many Hypocrites, that little think themſelves under that denomination; blindly plodding on in formality, under the Power of ſome unmortifi'd Luſt. I made not a full Confeſſion to him, as I had to others, tho' I had ſuffered ſo extreamly. O the hardneſs of my baſe Heart, that requir'd ſo many tough wedges to rive it!

Whenever I open'd my Mind to any I could be free with; I found ſome ſenſible eaſe, eſpecially upon confeſſing and aggravating my Crimes: which I deſire all to obſerve, as well as how I fail'd in my Conſults, either under-doing, or over-doing. I either neglected, or depended too much on their Aſſiſtances: Strange extreams, very diſtant, yet both I was guilty of to a high degree interchangeably; and all for want of looking up to God as I ſhould. My Circumſtances had a dreadful Aſpect, and had not God upheld me ſecretly with one Hand, while he preſs'd me as it were to the Grave and Hell with

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the other; infallibly the Pit had quite ſwallow'd me up, and ſhut her Mouth upon me. But Bleſſed be his holy Name, while he thus ſeem'd to frown me to the bottomleſs Pit, his everlaſting Arms were ſtill under me. O the adorable Patience of a holy God, towards a froward, obſtinate, wicked Worm!

Tho. à Kempis.

As it pleaſed God to abate ſomewhat the fierceneſs of theſe Reflexions, at times I fell to reading; and took a peculiar affection to a very devout, ſpiritual Book. Tho' I ſaw how far I was from Attainments in the Spiritual Life there deſcrib'd; yet I read it with ſingular Pleaſure, and earneſt deſires of Conformity to the Rules projected: tho' it dejected me, yet it kindly humbled me, making me loath the Follies of my paſs'd Life.

When my Fears ran high, the greateſt diverſion I found, was in vain Wiſhes that I had liv'd better; that I had taken Warning; that I had not been what I was, but rather in any Body's circumſtances than my own, tho' the meaneſt; or that I had never been; at leaſt a Creature capable of ſuch a Miſery, as I fear'd I was now conſign'd to. Tho' theſe Thoughts kept off more terrible ones, yet they carry'd a peculiar Sting with them, and kept out more profitable ones: By fits when I felt any Truce, I ſnatch'd at it, to improve it in earneſt Prayer, more than at my appointed Food. When importun'd to attend the publick Service of God, horror took hold of me; I dreaded the thoughts

thoughts of it; but when I felt a relaxation of the impetuosity of the Temptation, I comply'd.

Accordingly one Day I heard a Sermon on the glory of the Resurrection, expressing very emphatically the radiancy of all the Parts of a glorify'd Body. Impossible is it to conceive the cutting regret that peirc'd my very Soul thro' and thro', when I concluded I had for ever lost my Share in it: The Anguish of this Thought gnaw'd my Heart all the remains of that Evening, with more pungency than the Fear of Hell had before. Now and then this Fire burst forth in most dreadful Expressions, in Words and Gesture, to the Terror of all about me. I now repented of the time I had spent well, for concluding my self a Hypocrite, and a Cast-away; I apprehended God was the more incens'd and severe with me on that account; and the fate of such pronounced in the holy Gospel, increas'd my Distress.

Let such consider this, who little value Heaven more than a meer Refuge from Hell: When they fully know what they have lost, 'twill prove no small part of the Torment they fear. And let such as trifle with God in the Solemnities of his Worship, and put him off with the Husk of dry formal Performances; let such, I say, know, they trust to a broken Reed, that not only will fail them in their greatest need, but pierce them thro' with infinite Sorrow.

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While my Mind por'd only on one thing, it drove me to ſtrange Extremities, and paſſionate Expreſſions; but it pleaſed God, my Thoughts now ſhifted, which abated the keenneſs of them, ſo gave me an opportunity of changing Air. But alas! this was but a ſhort Truce; Horrors reviv'd, and every thing, I thought, preach'd terror to me. One Day reading the Inſcription on a Tomb that concluded with the Hopes of the Second Coming of Jeſus Chriſt: That Thought ſtruck me with inexpreſſible twinges of Horror; apprehending him as a terrible Judge, whoſe Favour I had for ever forfeited. I attended the Prayers of the Church, but with utmoſt Confuſion, repenting my neglect, or trifling in Devotion; conceiving I could gladly ſpend the remains of my Days on my Knees, would but God accept my Services and ſhine upon me. Could I communicate the Senſations I now was under, as I do the relation of them, I'm ſure they would convince the Hard Hearted'ſt Sinner breathing.

O how vaſtly different are Mens apprehenſions about theſe matters, while wrap'd up in Security, or under the power of theſe Impreſſions! how backward to Duty, and cold in it? At what a Diſtance does the great Day and Judge appear in one Caſe as tho' he would ne'er come? In the other, how is every Minute grudg'd, not employ'd in the one thing neceſſary? How like nothing does every thing elſe appear? What a nothing appears Time to Eternity?

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How near does the Judge appear? even at the Door. God help us to improve theſe Viciſſitudes to a ſteady, conſtant performance of our great Duty to the End.

Here I ſpent the weary Nights in telling the tedious Hours; and yet the Morning to me was but as the Shadow of Death: the Days I paſs'd in wiſhings for loſt Seaſons, and preſent poſſibilities; and this employ, tho' ſad enough, ſeem'd eaſy to the fiery Reflexions of ſome Paroxiſms, I every now and then fell into. Every holy uſeful Man I envy'd, as the only happy Man: Great Things and Men I deſpis'd or pity'd: Such as ſeduc'd me, I malign'd and loath'd: My Mind was full of odious Reflections on God's Conduct, which I moſt impudently cenſur'd, as deſigning my Ruine; ne'er conſidering his admirable Patience and Lenity towards me. My preſent ſmart eat out the ſenſe of all his paſs'd Favours, and the wicked Apprehenſions I had, that he intended ever to ſet me up as the Butt of his diſpleaſure, fill'd my Soul with rancor: That he only lifted me up with Advantages, to make my Fall the more deplorable. By theſe Suggeſtions Satan ſour'd my Spirit, and fretted it with envenom'd Reſentments, which often iſſu'd forth in dolorous Complaints. This occaſion'd me to reluct at the diſpoſals of Divine Providence, and at length to grow deſperate, as it were in Oppoſition to it. Thus, I own, work'd my vile Heart, (which now

was a little Emblem of Hell;) to the glory of God's rich forbearance let it be recorded, and my own ſhame. Lord lay not this Sin to my charge another day, for the holy Jeſus ſake. *Amen.*

While I glanced over any encouraging Paſſages in good Books; or diſcourſed them over, I was a little eaſed; but immediately my Thoughts return'd to the old Current, when theſe little helps were over; and ſometimes with more violence, as a Stream ruſhes after conquering ſome Obſtructions in its Courſe. I felt ſtrong deſires of doing good, and being uſeful to others, in the midſt of all theſe terrible Storms that continually roll'd over my Head; tho' the terror of them hinder'd my applying my ſelf to any Methods. This is the uſual way of the cruel Adverſary of our Souls, he firſt wheedles us into the loſs of our Golden Seaſons, and only ſhews us their Excellency, when the ſenſe of their worth can't Profit, but Torment.

After a few Weeks thus dolefully ſpent, I return'd back with much the ſame Temper of Mind: Change of Places, and variety of means, had little effect. I found no Plaſter broad enough for my Sore; no refuge for a Soul purſued with Storms of Divine Wrath, that follow'd me like Lightening: But ſtill matters came not to that extremity my Sins deſerv'd, and my ſtubborn Heart requir'd effectually to humble it. I ſcarce ever look'd on Fire, but Hell flaſh'd in my Face; and Eter-

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nity added to the apprehenſion, made the Thoughts intolerable. Time was a Burthen from theſe horrors; and yet I ſaw the worth of it more clearly than ever; and when I ſaw any well Employ'd I envy'd their happineſs, and regretted with the greateſt Anguiſh, my own miſerable Fate. I ſtill made but half Confeſſions, in diſguiſing expreſſions; for which reaſon I doubt not, God kept me longer on the Rack, to make me accept of Mercy on any Terms.

One Day I was perſwaded to divert my ſelf abroad after much intreaty, but every thing I look'd on ſtruck Terror. It was a bright Day, but I being a Son of Darkneſs, even the Light that chear'd others, ſtruck horror into me. I ſpent the time in vain and eager Wiſhes after the State of this and that good Man; ſo that what turn'd the Stream of more piercing Thoughts ſtill tormented me. As I return'd home, I felt ſtrange Impreſſions of God's Wrath darted into my Soul, that I thought purſued me like flaſhes of Lightening. They ſeem'd to be direct Rays ſtruck immediately on my naked Spirit with unconceivable Torture, that quite over-whelm'd and amaz'd me. They were ſhort, or they had been intolerable; no more to be born, than the Eye can bear the glaring Light of the Body of the Sun. I mention'd ſomething of this nature once before: Theſe were the only times I felt ſuch peculiar Coruſcations of

Wrath, if I may presume to call them so. They were not the result of fiery reflexions preceeding as usual, but appear'd to my Sense, as a Storm of Wrath immediately beating in on my poor Soul. This fill'd me with dreadful expectation of final Execution; these more immediate Inflictions of Divine displeasure, turn'd my Mind from thoughts that first troubled me, which were swallow'd up of them, as a Land-Flood is by the breaking in of the Sea.

Some time after, it pleas'd God to give me some consistence of Spirit, by intervals. In one of them I walk'd abroad with some Friends, and was very solemn in my Discourse, aiming to do them Service: After this attempt, I retired more within my self, and this thought fix'd with great force and solemnity on my Mind; *viz.* That Souls were continually passing out and into the World, in some place or other: and close thinking on this Subject, thro God's Assistance, had almost as powerful an effect, as if I had seen all; and he has since made it of Use to me, blessed be his holy Name.

I return'd home with an unusual calm in my Spirit, and immediately fell to drawing up some Rules to order my future Practice by; resolving to leave the final State of my Soul to God's good Pleasure; and in the mean while devote my self entirely to his Service: But God had not done with me yet, as I imagin'd.

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I was not ſenſible till now of the predominancy of ſome Vices; nay, that they were at all in me; and had any tax'd me with them, no doubt I had accounted them unreaſonably cenſorious. O how deceitful and deſperately wicked is the Heart of Man! a Conſideration that ſhould make us all very ſuſpicious of our ſelves, leaſt careleſneſs and conceit, ſuffer ſome Vice or other inobſervantly to ſteal in upon us, and work it ſelf ſo fully into our Conſtitution, till we loſe all ſight and ſenſe of it, as being fully of a piece with us. Finding my ſelf thus free for a Day or two, I forthwith reſolved to try Exerciſe, and change of Air; to confirm, what I thought ſo happily begun. I ſlept well ſome Nights, which I had not done for many Months paſs'd, ſo ſet forward leaving all to God. I had now a perfect contempt of every thing, I formerly ſet my Heart upon, I was only ambitious of being uſeful, and getting God my Friend and Portion.

Travelling a few Miles in this ſeeming compoſure, I began to feel my ſelf heavy; and that ſtay given to my Spirit, gradually withdrawing; till at length I found I could no longer under-prop my Soul with the hopes and reſolutions I lately conceiv'd and rely'd on: As I jog'd on, I felt my old Horrors bearing hard in upon me, but hoping to ſhake them off, I purſu'd my Deſign. The Day was cool, my Horſe eaſy, my Body as before; but all within began to be in a moſt diſconſolate hurry.

Thus I paſs'd the Remains of the Way, and can't but ſee a ſtrange over-ruling Hand of Providence, that my Fears ſhould not drive me back again; being much nearer home than the place I intended for; and preſs'd hard with my old amazing Troubles: The half of which would have hurri'd me back at another time. But God, it ſeems, had a Meſſage to ſend me upon, which he forc'd me fully to diſcharge, to the infinite Terror of my Self and all about me: For being now out of the reach of a regular Management; matters were brought ſoon to extremity, to my farther Diſcipline, and others Inſtruction; in which the Hand of God remarkably appear'd. As I drew near my Journies end, nothing but Terrors fac'd me; ſo amazing, that I loſt my way, tho' well acquainted with it. I felt inexpreſſible Anguiſh and Deſpair in my wretched Soul, to that degree, that I could ſcarce keep my Horſe. I was fill'd with an aſtoniſhing ſenſe of God's Frowns, and Diſpleaſure; and to my apprehenſion, the Heavens ſeem'd to threaten me, as if they would drive me into the Earth. This expreſſion appearing ſo fanciful, may occaſion ſome to drop a Smile, with a ſuitable Cenſure: But let ſuch ſtrangers to theſe kind of Exerciſes know, if they had felt but half what I did, they would be paſs'd jeſting. I don't ſuppoſe any thing real of that nature, I expreſs, influenc'd me; but only that ſuch a ſenſe was then vigorouſly and irreſiſtibly impreſs'd upon me; which I believe

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no judicious Perſon, will think impoſſible. I may ſeem a Barbarian to ſome that read this, and other Paſſages; but ſuch as have paſs'd a Sea of Troubles, and felt the Sting of fiery Serpents as they went through the howling Wilderneſs of Diſtreſs; they underſtand the Language of *Canaan*; to ſuch I ſhall ſpeak in their Mother-Tongue.

At the ſhutting in of the Evening, with much ado I reach'd home; but with ſuch viſible Conſternation in my Countenance, as ſtartled all about me. Every place look'd full of dread and horror; I long'd for Reſt, but dreaded Bed; I was no Company for any, but worſt of all to my Self. I was mute in all Diſcourſe, but clamorous within; I retir'd at laſt, and thro' God's Mercy got ſome Reſt.

I ſpent the next Day in deep concern, tho' with leſs pungency of thought: I ſtrove to ſtifle and diſguiſe it, but all in vain. The next Night I was reſtleſs, and greater agitations follow'd that Day, which put me on thoughts of returning; but upon every ſuch Deſign, I found my horrors redoubled upon me very unaccountably, tho' very remarkably; which at laſt ſcar'd me quite out of all ſuch Intentions.

Matters now grew worſe, and haſted to a conſummation of Diſtreſs. I was now ſo overwhelm'd with deſpairing Thoughts, that I refus'd to riſe till Noon. A religious Perſon coming to my Bed-ſide, endeavour'd to encourage me; telling me

this trouble would turn to a ſpiritual Advantage, which thro' God's infinite Mercy prov'd ſo, to whom be eternal Praiſe thro' Jeſus Chriſt. I got up at laſt in great bitterneſs of Soul, refuſing to eat, or be comforted. I made heavy charges againſt my Self; Deſpair overſpreading my Soul, extorted Confeſſions to my diſadvantage, but no relief: Juſtly did a holy God ſuffer me to be expos'd and tormented by that; I would not ſeaſonably acknowledge to my own Eaſe and his Glory.

I was prevail'd upon, tho' with great reluctancy, to go to Church: I had a very mean opinion of the Party that Preach'd, having ever obſerv'd him ſtrangely perfunctory in all his Performances; running the Prayers over without reverence or decency: But now ſuch an awe was ſtruck on my Spirit, as tho' I had heard a Voice from Heaven, till Terror and Aſtoniſhment poſſeſs'd every part of me. The greateſt part of the Diſcourſe I apply'd to my Self, which came with ſuch irreſiſtible force upon my Mind, as I ne'er felt before or ſince. I concluded God ſpoke to me by the Preacher's Mouth, and ſign'd the Deſtruction of my Soul and Body by ſome expreſſions, then providentially made uſe of: They were very emphatical, ſuitable to my Circumſtances, portending peculiar inflictions of Puniſhments, with terrible aggravating circumſtances, both as to Loſs and Pain; but above all, the power with which they preſs'd in upon me, was ſtrangely ſingular. None can imagine or I expreſs, the

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twinges of utmoſt Deſpair I then felt; leaving me perfectly diſmay'd and confounded; as if I had no Life left in me; expecting Death and Damnation every Minute, by ſome Judgment or other. I forbear particulars to prevent tediouſneſs; I ſhall only add: Others were affected with ſome Paſſages as relating to me; which they acknowledged to me at my return very unadviſedly; it adding much to my confuſion.

From this time, I continually expected to be made a fearful inſtance of divine Vengeance. All ſollicitations and Advices, had not the leaſt effect, to aſſwage my Grief. I ſhunn'd Company, but could not bear my own Thoughts; the ſhadow of Death and Hell ſeem'd to hover about, and encloſe me; eſpecially after the reading of a Sermon that Evening, ſome preſs'd me to hear. 'Twas wholly on Temptation, urging the avoiding the occaſions of Sin: How guilty they were that thro' neglect of this Duty, or by bold precipitate ventures, thruſt themſelves into the Mouth of it, how juſtly they were deſerted by God, and left to the ſwinge of their Luſts, and the rage of the Devil. This and much more to the ſame purpoſe gaul'd me extreamly.

The Door ſeem'd quite ſhut before; but now barr'd and bolted by divine Commiſſion. I was confirm'd in theſe Sentiments as irreſiſtibly, as if I had been certified by the Voice of God from the Clouds. All the indications concurring, were very lively

lively and ſurprizing, both in their nature and circumſtances; but were faſten'd upon me with that force of impreſſion, as is inexpreſſible.

I heard theſe two Sermons with more Terror than the *Iſraelites* the Thunder at the delivery of the Law: They exceedingly fear'd and trembled; but I fear'd till my Heart like *Nabal*'s dy'd within me, and became like a Stone for ſtupidity. I thought the Almighty had paſs'd Sentence as a Judge, and that I was arreſted by Satan, the Executioner of his Wrath. This was the firſt time I was apprehenſive of his Agency; which was, and ſtill is as evident to me, as this is a Pen, I'm now writing with: and what quickly follow'd put it paſs'd diſpute; as one action confirms another, when things of the ſame nature are repeated, tho' with different circumſtances.

I lay the greateſt part of this Night in the Contemplation of all the Forms of Torment, an active fancy could deviſe; the reſult of which, was deſperate unconcernedneſs. I believe this ſtupid State was order'd by a kind hand of Providence, to keep me from quite over-ſetting. In this Poſture, at break of Day, I undauntedly put by the Curtain, with full expectation of ſeeing the Devil. It pleaſed God, I ſaw nothing, tho' the Evening following I felt too much of him, to my infinite Terror, and of all about me.

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Finding the Night and Morning paſs thus contrary to my ſad forebodings, I began to reſume a little courage: but immediately ſtrange conceits obtruded themſelves upon me, till at laſt they center'd in one more terrible than the reſt. It may ſuffice to intimate, they all tended to compleat the Idea of my Miſery, and make me ſuppoſe my ſelf the very white of the Mark of Divine Vengeance. I had no Faith, at leaſt in exerciſe, to repel theſe fiery Darts in this hour of darkneſs and deſperate aſſaults; but the bleſſed God, moſt mercifully, tho' inviſibly, ſupported me. Theſe thoughts were injected to fill my Spirit with rancorous reſentments againſt the ever Bleſſed God; my Mind was chafed with hideous Paſſions and Repinings, fretting impiouſly againſt the Almighty; imputing that to hatred and ſeverity, that ſprang from Love and kind deſigns full of Pity. I curs'd the Day of my Birth after ſome torturing reflexions on the Juſtice and Mercy of God; which I ſawcily cenſur'd; ſeldom looking back on my paſt miſcarriages, but to leſſen them, by comparing them with others; thereby erecting a Stock, to graft ſoure prejudices and cenſures upon. I caught at every accident to blow up conceits, and ſtrengthen'd the Deluſion: In theſe terrible agitations of Mind and Body, I ſpent this forlorn Day, all expreſſive of inward Agonies.

All this was but a prelude to what paſs'd that Evening. Towards the decline of the Day,

Day, I was more reſtleſs, till at length I fell into ſurprizing Tranſports, wild Poſtures, extravagant Expreſſions; all concurring to expreſs my inward Convulſions. I no ſooner betook my ſelf to my Chamber, but I plainly diſcern'd, I was acted by another Spirit more than my own: Such ſtrange Emotions in Soul and Body enſued, as perfectly convinced me they were preternatural; the ſenſe of this made me deſperate, and my behaviour was accordingly, both in Language and Action.

'Tis in vain to attempt a Deſcription of what I felt within, at this time; and were the livelieſt given, it could not be receiv'd in any proportion to the reality of the thing. It may ſuffice, what outwardly appear'd ſatisfy'd the Perſons preſent fully of the true cauſe of all that then paſs'd. I had read and heard enough of Satan's Power in this kind; and in this Illneſs had been caution'd about it: But alas! the notion of the thing, lay very looſe and unheeded in my Mind; as it is, I fear, but a uſeleſs Opinion with too many that acknowledge it: But now ocular Inſpection could not afford me clearer evidence of the thing, than my preſent Senſations; and the Operations they concluded in.

This dreadful Paroxyſm, laſted near an Hour: the Fire of Hell was thrown into my Heart, and burſt out at my Mouth, and affected ev'ry Member. Satan was now winding me up to the higheſt pitch, to expreſs his envenom'd Malice againſt

poor

poor Souls, and his implacable hatred of the ever bleſſed God, and his All-glorious precious Chriſt; the very pinnacle of his curſed Deſign; which he finiſh'd with ſomething ſurprizingly ſtrange. This aſtoniſh'd all about me, but my wretched Self much more, as privy to inward Emotions, and circumſtances of Action, others could not obſerve, tho' the more obvious part of the Scene, fill'd all with amazement.

For ſome weighty Reaſons, I ſhall mention the Words and Paſſages, but in general Terms; not to ſpare my ſelf, but to prevent ſome ill Uſe might be made of them. At the thought and naming them, my very Heart, Hand, and all within and without me, ſhould tremble. And I ſolemnly beg of God, for Sweet Jeſus's ſake, that thoſe Words and Actions may ne'er be imputed to me another Day. For tho' all that paſs'd was againſt my conſent; yet my Sins having given my Enemy an advantage againſt me; I may juſtly fear; I'm ſo far reſponſible for what then was tranſacted.

In ſhort then, the prime Deſign of the Prince of Darkneſs, ſeem'd very remarkably levell'd againſt the *moſt adorable JESUS, the holy ever bleſſed SON of GOD, as the only SAVIOUR of the World*, while he actuated my Tongue in ſome Blaſphemous Expreſſions, peculiarly againſt that Bleſſed One. There was ſuch a concurrence of Words, Geſtures, and other ſtrange circumſtances of Action conſpiring to this Helliſh Event, with-

without the leaſt precedent or concomitant thought or intention of my own; as demonſtrated all to be pure Devilliſm; and all my movements to be meerly Mechanical, as acted by a foreign Principle. I was not at all ſenſible of the Tendency of the various Tranſactions: what harmony or ſubſerviency the Parts had one to the other, nor what they jointly drove at till the full completion. My perception of things were as clear, as at any time; and I was very ſenſible I was not my own Maſter. Upon the very firſt extravagant Motion, I felt my ſelf plainly in ill hands; and dreaded in general the upſhot of the matter; but was without the leaſt privity, as to the particularity of the Deſign; till it came to the laſt finiſhing Strokes; which gave me a proof that carried with it the force of a Demonſtration.

I pray God, ſuch as reject reveal'd Religion, and entertain low thoughts of Jeſus Chriſt, may ſeriouſly conſider this Paſſage. Satan fights not againſt his own Kingdom: What he levels his moſt invenom'd Darts at, after a long ſeries of artificial Preparations, we may be ſure is a matter of no ſmall conſequence: What the Father of Lies with ſo much Induſtry and Sagacity, attempts to run down with the imputation of falſity, we have great Reaſon to believe is one of the brighteſt and moſt beneficial Truths. He fought now neither with great nor ſmall, but with the King of *Iſrael*; the alluſion is plain, and the deſign of it needs more

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an honeſt Heart, than any Comment. If any Deiſt or Unbeliever peruſe this Paragraph, let it confound his curſed Tenets, or let him know aſſuredly, here's one Teſtimony more ſhall ſhortly riſe up in Judgment againſt him to ſtop his Mouth for ever, with reſpect to any Pleas and Excuſes; when he ſhall hear the Sentence of eternal and intolerable Wrath paſs upon him from the very Perſon he now vilifies and denies; if he obſtinately and finally perſevere in his execrable Infidelity. Let the weak Believer aſſume courage in reading theſe Lines, and extract a Cordial to his Faith out of this Poiſon; as Bleſſed be God he has, that now exhorts him to it. So eaſy is it with God to bring Light out of Darkneſs, and Heaven out of the very center of Hell.

Begone thou foul peſtilent Fiend; haſt thou the impudence to deny Him, whoſe very Name makes thee tremble? Save thy ſelf if thou canſt, from the Wrath and Power of that Saviour thou wouldſt deny: Down to thy Chains of Darkneſs, which reſerve thee to the Terrors of the great Day; in the mean while I know thou believeſt and trembleſt. Thou inſolent Apoſtate Spirit; I here, in the Face of the Sun, abjure thee; and all thoſe vile Expreſſions thou forc'd upon me. I diſclaim, with utter abhorrence, both thee and them, in the Preſence of God, Angels and Men; and here confeſs JESUS to be The Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed, of one Subſtance with the Father, God over all

all Bleſſed for ever, the only Saviour of the World; in whoſe mighty Merits and Interceſſion, I repoſe entirely all my hopes of Salvation. Deny, if thou dar'ſt, that Power that ſhortly will compleat thy Miſery; in the mean while, may thy wicked Devices return upon thy own pate; and to expreſs the greater deteſtation of thy execrable Deſigns, were it lawful, I'd uſe that Tongue thou once abus'd to Blaſpheme Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed; to pray thy own Prayer backward; even that Jeſus would torment thee before the time.

This dreadful diſpenſation being over, ſome ſedateneſs for a time follow'd, tho' I concluded my Caſe was deſperate. I betook my ſelf at length to Bed, in abſolute deſpair. All now forſook me, pitying me at a diſtance, as one abandoned by God, and conſign'd over to Wrath; ſome intimations of their Sentiments of this kind, they drop'd at parting; all which, with much more to the ſame purpoſe, confirm'd me in my deſperate Concluſions.

I kept my Bed all the next day, none coming near me, but ſuch whoſe attendance was neceſſary: In this miſerable plight, I lay expecting the worſt that could befal me. 'Twas thought fit to take away ſome Blood; and a Vein being open'd, the Chirurgeon ſaid, he ne'er felt any ſo hot before, as out of a Caldron; 'twas his very expreſſion; which made me conclude my State was hopeleſs. I now ſeldom pray'd for my Self, but one coming into my Room, I ask'd him to pray by me,

which

which he refuſed, for Reaſons beſt known to himſelf; tho' I deſire to have a very charitable Opinion of him, and the reaſons of his denial.

I ſpent this Night in hideous fanſies about future Torments, that crouded in upon me; having firſt ſpent the Day in continual Agitations of Mind that conſumed my Fleſh and Spirits: So ſharp was my Blood, that ſome parts of my Body were excoriated; but alas! the anguiſh my poor Soul was in, left no room for regarding any bodily wants or pains.

One of a very diſorderly Life, pay'd me a Viſit: he had ſeen me before in the depth of my diſtreſs; the ſight of which much terrify'd him, and brought him to ſerious reflexions. Theſe together with the ſad ſight of my wretched circumſtances, after a little diſcourſe, drew from him this glorious confeſſion, very pathetically expreſs'd: *viz.* "Oh there is a "moſt glorious God, and one Hours com-"munion with him, is worth a World. This cut my forlorn Soul thro' and thro'; to think what a God he was getting an Intereſt in, and I had loſt for ever: Seeing him in this diſpoſition, I deſired him to pray with me, which after a little boggling he did. His Prayer was exceeding ſhort, and ran chiefly upon this Petition; that God would prepare us for all the ſad changes that might happen before Morning. This I knew related to me; I perceived his apprehenſions of my caſe were deſperate, and fear'd his expreſſions were

Ominous; over-ruled by God to declare the fatal Iſſue of all. Theſe thoughts uniting to make one Impreſſion, drove me to my wits end; till amazement and ſtupidity relieved me.

Thus did God hem me in on all ſides, with his waves of unſpeakable Terror: One praying, t'other refuſing, equally tormented me: God ſhut me up and I could not come forth, till his pleaſure releas'd me: none could help me now, nor hinder me then: While he was againſt me I found every thing elſe was; and when He appear'd for me, ev'ry thing aſſiſted me. Let ſuch as run to their little ſhifts in diſtreſs, conſider; if they proſper, 'tis a Curſe: If God deſign them good, he'll ne'er leave them, till he has whipp'd them home from their Idols; as a tender Father do's refractory Children. My Comforters were all like *Job*'s, ſuch as ſtrove moſt to drop Oil into my Wounds, let ſomething ſlip ere they had done, that more exaſperated them; and others let fall ſuch deſpondent expreſſions, as made them ſtink and corrupt.

This Acquaintance of mine, ſoon wore off this bright Conviction, and grew worſe than ever; the ſame fate attending Convictions as does Afflictions; whom they ſoften not, they harden; which State perſiſted in, is a ſure preparative for Hell: The Droſs unpurg'd by the refining Fire, becomes fuel to feed the Flames of the infernal Furnace for ever. A Learned Divine expreſſes himſelf thus: "In all the Bi-

"ble,

" ble, tho' it be a Hiſtory of more than " 4000 years, we read of but one, that " was Converted juſt before his Death: " And we believe he did convert at " his firſt convincing Call: Rarely do a- " ny ſavingly convert, who do not upon " their firſt Convictions. St. *Auſtin*'s ſti- fled Convictions coſt him dear: and *Spi- ra*'s caſe is well known. And I my ſelf am another Precedent, who fear'd often, God would have made me a ſecond *Spira* in my end: In my Diſtreſs I expected it, and nothing ran ſo much in my Thoughts as that ſhortly the miſerable concluſion of my Life, would occaſion a new Edition of that Title. I dare not ſay as this Learn- ed Man does; for I found God exceeding Merciful in renewing Convictions. The beſt uſe we can make of it is, to pray, and ſtrive to improve every one given us, as not knowing but the firſt may be the laſt; but ne'er to deſpair on ſuch a conſideration.

A poor illiterate Man, was now the chief of my converſe: who often gave me encouraging Advice; which, tho' meanly, and ſometimes ſcarce intelligibly expreſs'd, yet God bleſſed it; as I hope he will him for his charitable Deſign. God crowns ſincerity with ſucceſs, and triumphs in bleſ- ſing weak Performances.

I perceiv'd my Lungs began now to be impair'd; I felt a continual irritation there from ſharpneſs of Blood; ſo aſſur'd my ſelf, I could not laſt long. And I'm ſatisfi'd I could not have held out at the

old rate many days longer, had not God's Providence interpos'd. But my extremity was God's opportunity; the firſt turn was now given to my Recovery, tho' I perceiv'd it not till many days after. Some uſeful Company now viſited me, and tho' I was ſtill under gloomy apprehenſions, and broke now and then into great fits of Paſſion; yet by continual Diſcourſe they kept my thoughts from preying upon me, as they did before without intermiſſion. With much ado they work'd off the terrible impreſſion, the Sermon before mentioned fix'd upon me. Talk made me reply; and this altercation afforded ſome relaxation to the bent of my thoughts; my Mind roll'd from one mournful Object to another, till I tumbled into an apprehenſion, I had committed the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Tho' this Fear preſs'd me hard with the ſenſe of its unpardonableneſs; yet ſhifting prov'd my advantage; till it pleas'd God to bleſs me with ſome conſiſtence of Spirit: Not but that horrors ſhook me by fits, but the keenneſs of my Thoughts for the moſt part, were alleviated.

In a little time it pleaſed God, after ſome toſſing thoughts, to begin to ſcatter this dreadful Tempeſt. The diſmal ſhades of this horrid long Night began to vaniſh; and the glorious Son of Righteouſneſs ariſing with healing in his Wings, the bleſſed bright Day began to dawn to my relief. For which free and ſurprizing Grace; eternal Praiſes be aſcribed to God and the

the Lamb that ſit upon the Throne for ever and ever.

If any poor trembling Soul be diſmay'd at the terror of ſome paſſages paſs'd, as apprehending himſelf obnoxious to the ſame Diſcipline and Danger; let him rally his Hope and Courage, by reflecting ſeaſonably on the boundleſs Power and Goodneſs of God; that cou'd and wou'd relieve ſo deſperate a Caſe, if any on this ſide Hell may be call'd ſo. Let this Inſtance of infinite inexpreſſible Mercy, prevent Deſpair in all, while they do but live and breath. I conclude in the Words of the Apoſtle, if without Preſumption I may apply them to my own State. *Howbeit for this cauſe I obtained Mercy, that in me Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering for a Pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to everlaſting Life. Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal Inviſible, the only wiſe God, be Honor and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.* 1 Tim. 1. 16, 17.

Before I make ſome Reflexions on what is paſs'd, I ſhall here inſert a Paſſage that ſlipt my Memory. Had it occurr'd to my Thoughts in due order of Time, it ſhould have been mentioned ſooner; but as it tends to illuſtrate the Juſtice of God in permitting matters to come to ſo great extremity, take it here as follows.

When I firſt remov'd for change of Air, at the latter end of my ſtay there, in a deſpairing Agony I form'd a Reſolution between God and my own Soul, with great earneſtneſs; that if he reſtor'd me,

I would diligently avoid all occaſions of thoſe Sins by which I had moſt diſhonored him, and entirely dedicate my ſelf to his Service.

But alas! no ſooner had God taken off his Hand in ſome degree, and given me a little breathing, but I ventur'd into Company I knew had prov'd a ſnare to me: I went with a real deſign to talk ſeriouſly, and did ſo accordingly. But in a little time the Enemy got an Advantage, and by his impulſes brought me to the very point of Ruin: But it pleas'd my compaſſionate Lord and Maſter, that has all Power in Heaven and Earth, to ſtop me in the midſt of my Career, and by the mention of the ſweet name of Jeſus, that then happen'd to be made, ſtop'd me at the very brink of the Precipice: not that I ſuppoſe any Magical Charm in that Name, tho' a very lovely and delightful one; but that he himſelf made it operative, as he did his Look to St. *Peter*.

Tho' God reſcu'd me thus, it coſt me great regret, when I came to reflect on the breach of ſuch ſolemn Engagements, and the enſuing guilt and danger. O the deceitfulneſs of my falſe Heart! ſhould a living Man complain, for the Puniſhment of his Faults, after ſuch a Provocation? Or any wonder Heaven purſues Perjury, with remarkable vengeance? How many are free among the Dead, and loſt for leſs offences? How juſtly might the divine Vengeance have made an utter end of me; and

and hung me up in Chains for an Example to all bold Offenders? 'Tis of the Lord's Mercy alone I was not conſum'd; I moſt freely acknowledge it to the glory of his moſt amazing Patience, after I had loaded him with my Sins, as a Cart is preſs'd with Sheaves, in the Language of the Prophet. God ſpar'd me endleſly, and did not ſtir up all his Wrath, when I was ripe for Exciſion. O never enough adored Goodneſs!

Obſerve here the folly and falſity, bound up in the Heart of Man; above all things deceitful and deſperately wicked: Suſpect thy own, ſearch and reſearch it, and thou ſhalt find one abomination hid under another, even to abyſſes. If Jealouſie be requiſite any where, 'tis here: Not to be Jealous here, is to be fearleſs of Ruin; above all keepings then, keep thy Heart; *for out of it are the Iſſues of Life*; as the Wiſe Man declares. If good Intentions are no ſure grounds of ſecurity in approaching the Avenues of Temptation; how will Vows and Reſolutions ſnap like *Sampſon*'s Withs, in all ſuch Adventures, as are meerly grounded on Humor and Preſumption? When Experience has ſhewn us fully and repeatedly our danger, and we engage againſt the occaſions of it by ſolemn Promiſes, we muſt expect redoubled Aſſaults from Satan, to dip us in ſuch double dy'd Guilt, as it proves if we fall into it; and conſequently no pretences whatſoever ſhould prevail upon us, to ap-

Prov. 4. 23.

proach the Verge of it, leaſt ſome unhappy Spark catch upon our Tinder, and ſet all on a Blaze: If in any caſe, Duty by Proxy be allowable, 'tis ſurely in this.

I ſhall add one very memorable Obſervation more, to the Praiſe and Honor of the ſuperabounding Grace, and Mercy of my ever bleſſed Lord and Maſter, which is this. That notwithſtanding my many moſt heinous Provocations, and the length and violence of my Temptations, yet during the whole Proceſs to the Period, I ne'er was under the leaſt motion or ſollicitation, to make away my ſelf. I remember not the leaſt thought that had any tendency that way; which here I acknowledge was a moſt peculiar favour, entirely flowing from the boundleſs compaſſions of the ever bleſſed God, whoſe Nature is infinite Love. I muſt own, I deſerv'd not the leaſt Pity, but the contrary. I therefore aſcribe it all, from the very bottom of my Heart, to his merciful interpoſition; and regiſter it, as a Specimen of his exceeding ſpecial Condeſcention, ſince few or none eſcape it, under ſuch preſſing circumſtances: And many, O, too too many have of late quite fallen by it. And conſidering the length and ſtreſs of my Temptations, that ran thro' the greateſt part of my Life; and the laſt and ſtrongeſt enduring many Months off and on, in its terrible onſets; I ſay, duly conſidering theſe and many other circumſtances, my caſe appears ſtrangely ſingular, and to my ſelf amazingly prodigious. And

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ſince I can't expreſs my ſelf in terms becoming ſo ſignal an occaſion, let what's inexpreſſible be expreſt, as beſt it may, by ſilent Wonder, and ſolemn Adoration.

Having faithfully related matter of fact, I proceed to ſome ſhort Reflections. Some ſlips there may be as to niceties of Time, tho' I endeavour'd to be punctual, that matters might appear in a truer Light; and ſome things of leſſer moment I omitted, to bring all into a leſſer compaſs. As for being impos'd upon my ſelf; ſuch as preſume ſo, after an impartial reflection on what follows, are left to their own Sentiments. I obtrude nothing with an air of confidence on any Man; *let every Man be fully perſuaded in his own Breaſt.*

My buſineſs here, is not with unreaſonable Men, that have not Faith; I leave them to the ſenſible Proofs they demand; which I'm ſure they will have firſt or laſt. To what purpoſe is it to attempt to anſwer the Cavils of ſuch, which are as endleſs as their Humors and Fancies? Whoſe intereſt it is, not to believe any thing of this nature; at leaſt they conceive ſo; and therefore reſolve not to believe; but by ſophiſtry and confidence, to baffle the brighteſt Conviction, and look Truth it ſelf out of Countenance, by the force of a ſturdy Reſolution. The whole Clan of Materialiſts, Scepticks, Deiſts, ſneer at all Eſſays of this nature; burleſque and pelt them with their mechanical Phraſes, and little pert Sayings. All the return I ſhall make

make to their fleering Sarcaſms, is, That for Men to laugh themſelves to Death, in fact, is no Solæciſm; and that I have ſeen poor Wretches go grinning to Execution.

Theſe Men receive no more Impreſſions from Diſcourſes of this nature, than Flints do from Seals. And there's another ſort, as unſtable as Water; who, like that, no ſooner receive an Impreſſion, but loſe it. Curioſity leads both ſometimes to peep into ſerious Books, to meet with a Scratch for their Itch, not for Cure, but Pleaſure. I wiſh I could hope, the worſt that's likely to befal ſuch, is, to meet with a diſappointment.

'Tis for the ſake of the real Chriſtian; to ſatisfy, as I'm able, the judicious and inquiſitive; to Arm and Strengthen the Weak; to Comfort and Encourage the Doubting and Deſpondent; who, I hope, by God's Bleſſing (which I earneſtly implore) will receive the impreſſion as Wax does from the Seal. Good People, tho' they believe the agency of the Devil in ſome caſes, are yet too apt to overlook it in many; and conſequently don't ſo oppoſe him as they might.

I'll freely acknowledge the great power of Fancy and Melancholy; that many things are juſtly imputed to the natural prevalency of that Diſeaſe, and rampancy of that Power: That when it's complicated in this manner, and Imagination is acted by the diſorders of the Blood and Spirits, ſtrange and ridiculous things have

have been believed and perform'd? This and much more I freely aſſent to, and yet I'm bold to ſay, that in many of theſe caſes, Satan is alſo very buſy, tho' often inſenſibly: He loves to fiſh in troubled Waters; thoſe are his choiceſt nicks to do the greateſt miſchief with moſt Succeſs, becauſe with leaſt obſervation; cunningly blending his poiſonous Inſinuations, with the natural operations and effects of Diſeaſes, by moſt, not at all ſuſpected.

For proof of this, conſult the many dreadful Temptations, grafted upon a Melancholy diſpoſition; whether from Temperament natural or adventitious; by Croſſes, Diſappointments, *&c.* in the World. Some fear Want in the midſt of Affluence; and ſome Die for fear of Dying: Some in deſperate ſadneſs, whine and groan away their Days, when they miſs of what their Hearts were ſet upon: Others are continually tormented with black and deſponding Thoughts, till they turn their own Executioners.

Go in any of theſe caſes, or the like, which are endleſs, to a Divine; and he'll ſend you to the Phyſician; which, tho' ever uſeful when matters are at this paſs; whether the diſorder begin in the Mind or Body, becauſe they immediately affect one the other mutually; yet we know all Methods of Phyſick are frequently baffled; till at length the Phyſician remit his Patient to his Ghoſtly Father, to ſettle the Conſcience.

I wiſh this charge againſt ſome Divines, may fall upon fewer, than I fear it does,

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The People being as much over-prone to aſcribe natural Diſeaſes to the Devil, as many Phyſicians are to aſcribe diabolical diſtempers and vexations to Nature. Dr. Moore Myſt. of Godl. pag. 113.

and that more Phyſicians were impleadable upon the part that concerns them. As ignorant unthinking People are apt to miſtake ſome natural Diſtempers, for what's ſupernatural: So the learned are as ready to run into the oppoſite extream, and account Philoſophically for the ſtrangeſt appearances.

When matters are come to this deplorable paſs, that neither Counſels nor Medicaments, have any effect; then the Caſe ſeems out of doubt, that the Party is under ſtrong Temptation: But when God renders either of the means, or both, conjunctly ſucceſsful; all difficulties are then uſually ſolv'd, by the Laws of Mechanick Powers, or the meer ceſſation of the uneaſy reflections of the Mind, which tho' in great part true, as to the more immediate Cauſes; yet the more remote, tho' ſocial and powerful, I mean the injections of Satan, are frequently over-look'd, by a cuſtomary non-attendance, by too many.

I'm not ſo vain as to ſuppoſe; that thoſe I now addreſs my ſelf to, deny or wholly over-look diabolical Operations: But what I drive at is this; that in leſſer indiſpoſitions, and Temptations of this kind, Satan's agency is too little thought of, and natural means too much cried up and depended on, tho' in due place, they certainly have their ſubſerviency. Proper Evacuations, Alteratives and Opiates, I found in my own Caſe very neceſſary and uſeful: To reject then the Means, telling the Phyſician he can do them no Service, be-

becauſe Conſcience is out of the reach of Medicine, as is the uſual cuſtom of too many; is fooliſh and ridiculous. Some deſpiſe Means, others dote on them; both are extreams very faulty and dangerous, and tho' ſo diſtant, yet they often beget one the other, thro' Humane frailty: The one tempts God, the other neglects him: The one nullifies the Creature, the other Idolizeth it: The one will have God at his beck to work Miracles, and change the courſe of Nature to relieve him; the other will have nothing to do with him, but pins his Faith entirely upon ſecond Cauſes; is not the medium clear and plain? as evident as the Light? How often are theſe prepoſterous Methods blaſted, that God may vindicate his Honor, and Men receive Inſtruction?

'Tis eaſy to conceive what extremities the ferment and fury of the Blood and Spirits naturally bring upon us; and what uſe an inviſible Agent may make of theſe diſorders by injecting his fiery Darts, like Oil to the flames, to encreaſe the combuſtion. All know how powerfully Opiates check theſe exorbitant Motions: And it is as eaſy to conceive how foreign Suggeſtions and Impreſſions, muſt abate of their Vigor and Efficacy, for want of theſe occaſions, eſpecially if we ſuppoſe a parity of application and influence in both Caſes, which is rationally to be ſuppoſed; becauſe let Nature be in the beſt plight poſſible, if Satan's Commiſſion be enlarg'd, we know he can quite pervert it, as in the caſe of

Job;

Job; and ſo act his part to the utmoſt extent. But we know he can't budge a Hairs breadth beyond Divine permiſſion, to our great comfort and only ſafety; and therefore to ſuppoſe him to proceed arbitrarily, and encreaſe his Onſets at pleaſure; is to beg the Queſtion in this caſe, and leave no room for Argument.

So Sceptical are ſome, that they'll believe nothing but what they ſee; ſo deny the exiſtence of Spirits. For the ſame reaſon they may deſire to ſee with their Ears, hear with their Eyes, and underſtand by the Motion of their Hands and Feet; Spirits naturally being as unſuitable Objects to our Senſories, as this ſuppoſed tranſpoſition of Faculties and Objects, is to the regular State of Nature. They may be intimately preſent with us, without our Cognizance; unleſs they aſſume Vehicles, or otherwiſe accommodate themſelves to the capacity of our Senſes. Others entertain ſuch groſs conceptions of them, that they can't conceive how they mingle themſelves with their Spirits; as if the Devil could not act but where he appears, and finds room to ſhew his Cloven Foot, and wag his Satyrs Tail. Some again, have ſo criticiz'd and ſubtiliz'd upon their nature, till they have forgot the danger they were in from their Operations; and in the iſſue have only puzzled themſelves and others, with a few aiery uſeleſs Notions. The profitable knowledge of theſe things, conſiſts chiefly, in conceiving them as Active, Miſchievous,

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Imperceptible Powers; and in arming a-gainſt them accordingly. The holy Spi-rit in Scripture, gives us very uſeful hint but none to gratify curioſity; which we have ſmall reaſon to expect, ſince that firſt ruin'd us, and gave Satan the Power he has againſt us.

He is ſtiled there the Red Dragon; to denote his Bloody cruel Deſigns. The *roaring Lion, going about ſeeking whom he may devour*; to expreſs his Strength, Fierce-neſs, Terror, and Activity in deſtroying. The old Serpent; to ſignifie his craft and experience, to circumvent. The Prince of Darkneſs; inſinuating his clandeſtine me-thods. The Prince of the Power of the Air; hinting their Dominion, Numbers, and Complotments. Are ſmall matters couch'd in theſe Terms? Do ſuch expreſ-ſions as are mentioned *Eph.* 6. 11, to 19. inſinuate ſmall difficulties and dangers? We are there alſo furniſh'd with a com-pleat ſuit of Armor to oppoſe them; and with Inſtructions how to uſe it: 'Twill be very conducive then to our ſafety, to ſtudy and improve our Skill by Exer-ciſe: To prepare in Peace for War; leſt we be at a loſs for Weapons or dexterity to uſe them, when the time of Action ſurpriſes us. Add to this the reading of ſuch Books as treat of theſe Subjects: And here take the advice of experienced Champions; ſuch as Biſhop *Hall*, *Capel*, *Gurnall*, *Gilpin*, &c. where Treaſures of Experience are to be met with. The ad-vantages our Enemies have againſt us, as great

great as they are, yet ſhall not ruine us; if we follow the Advice of the holy Ghoſt; to reſiſt the Devil ſtedfaſtly by Faith; to *be Sober and Vigilant*; *to draw nigh to God*, &c. then the Promiſe runs, *he will flee from you. And the God of Peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your Feet ſhortly.* Which Promiſes under the Broad Seal of Heaven are a bleſſed Security.

Jam. 4. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Rom. 16. 20.

Whether Melancholy begin in the Mind or Body firſt, as certainly it does in both very variouſly; it continues not long a meer natural Diſeaſe, unleſs in ſome very peculiar Caſes; where God may for wiſe Reaſons reſtrain Satan; which it may be ſeldom, if ever, happens wholly: that when God don't thus interpoſe, he infallibly ſome way improves the opportunity; theſe Seaſons being handles for him to lay the faſter hold of us.

That when God ſuffers this; 'tis for our Sins; whether in the Good, for their Chaſtiſement and Improvement; or in the Bad, to awaken and amend them; or as God's Executioner, to torment them before the time.

That God's holy Spirit convinces us of Sin, *&c.* by rouzing Conſcience, blazoning God's Wrath, and ſetting his Terrors in array againſt us; holding the Eye of the Soul glaring on its Guilt; its multiplicity and aggravations; God's Juſtice and hot Diſpleaſure.

Upon this natural Conſcience trembles, and ſtings the Soul with fiery Reflexions: Theſe agi-

agitate the Blood and Spirits, which in a little time pervert the courſe of Nature; particularly filling the Fancy with endleſs Scenes of Horror, which renders the Diſeaſe complicate.

Upon all comes Satan, injecting his fiery Darts without intermiſſion; aggravating Sin; filling the Mind with deſpairing, jealous, hard thoughts of God; repreſenting him inexorable, Sin unpardonable, Hell and endleſs Torment, inſupportable and unavoidable: fixing the Idea of a black and diſmal Eternity, with all the Schemes of Miſery the Fancy can deviſe; till the Soul, quite amaz'd with ſuch a load of Wrath, ſinks into the utmoſt Deſpondency; ready to diſſolve at the apprehenſion of ſuch an Ocean of Miſery; and if God ſupport not the poor Wretch inviſibly, it lies down in anguiſh for ever: This renders the Caſe conſummate.

Innumerable are the Preparatives which Providence imploys, as introductory to this ſad condition: All ſorts of Afflictions, natural Temper, great Guilt, a ſleepy ſecure Life, which when thus alarm'd affords infinite ſtore for the Worm of Conſcience to feed upon.

Satan ſeems more intent upon our eternal Deſtruction, than our preſent Torment; tho' where he can, he attempts both with utmoſt Malice.

He diſturbs not Men in their Sins; but is willing all ſhould run glib and ſmooth while they are his Vaſſals, and advance his Kingdom; but if they are rouz'd by

any awakening Providence; he then plies every Oar of diligence to lull them asleep again, by Diversions, Company, or Pleasures. But if they refuse this Opium; will be serious, and make towards Heaven; then he'll harrass and terrify them; raking deep into the dunghil of their wicked Hearts, to blast their Hopes, and nip their Endeavours; and so by his infernal Sparks, attempts to Fire the Soul; till it burn down the Lamp of Life; and by the weight of final Despair, plunge to the bottom of Hell. But for such as are out of his clutches, they shall be sure to feel now and then some scratches of his Talonds; at least his poisonous Breath, which tho' it kill not, will yet be very offensive. This is the reason why so many holy Souls, are continually teis'd and baited with his cursed onsets; while the Wicked pass their Days merrily without check or controul; a Case too common to slip our observation. Thus far in general.

I shall glance at some particulars.

How fair a Conviction did God give me very early? And how signally did he repeat it? How just and kind too was he, to bring on Troubles, to awaken my sleepy Soul? To spend such variety of Cost and Care, to cultivate so resty and untractable a Creature? How might he have curs'd me once for all, by throwing up the Reins of Government upon the Neck of my wicked Will and Desires?

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My Temperament was naturally Sanguine, the re[illegible] quite to Melancholy; but guilt bred fear and thoughtfulneſs, which in time pervert the natural craſis of the Blood and Spirits; theſe ſet Fancy on work to hatch and multiply more; which like a Stone caſt into the Water, propagates circular undulations endleſly: Much more when Satan's permitted to ſtrike it; How will Wave rise upon Wave, till we ſtart at our own ſhadows? This was my Caſe, thro' the greateſt part of my Life; and tho' a lamentable one; yet was it wiſely ordered and over-ruled by God.

I endeavour'd to rally all the Forces of Reaſon and Reſolution, againſt the Legions of theſe rebellious Shadows, but they often mutined and refus'd Service; nay often went over to ſtrengthen the Enemy. How eaſily does a weak Man ſurprize a ſtrong one a Sleep? How does the Body grow ſtrong by Exerciſe; and the faculties of the Soul by frequent Operations? On the contrary, all languiſh and droop under ſloth and neglect. To what a predominancy then muſt Fancy riſe, under continual employ, while Reaſon ruſts out in diſuſe? If an caſie Maſter keep not up his Authority, how ſoon will a bold pragmatical Servant gain upon him, till he domineer and tyrannize?

The Fancy, all allow, Satan may interfere with, by his Suggeſtions and Impreſſions: And thus he may trouble, cloud, and ſtrangely affect the higher Powers of the Soul by this proximity. Tho' God

alone has a Key to the Heart; yet when permitted, he can knock at the Door, obſerve Anſwers by effects, operations, and many paſſages that come within the reach of his Obſervation: All which he improves with the utmoſt Skill and malignity to our detriment. He continually ſollicits for theſe acceſſes, and our follies often encourage and give him an opportunity to prevail: Strange power he had over holy *Job*, upon his challenge, by way of trial of his Integrity; and much more we may ſuppoſe God may allow him in ſome kind or other; while we unnaturally renounce Allegiance to our rightful Lord, and ſubmit to a Uſurper: Tempt the Tyrant, to tempt and Torment us, by bold Preſumption and ſottiſh Security. And when he acts not his rage with open violence, he often vents his Malice more ſilently and inwardly, but no leſs ſucceſsfully.

'Twas juſt for a holy God to give me up to Satan's Tyranny, when I threw off his eaſy Yoke, and the government of my Self; that I might read my Sins in my Sufferings, as in ſo many capital Letters. When the ſoft Voice of Reaſon, God's Word and Spirit were neglected, Conſcience clamor'd, Fancy ſet in and eccho'd Wo, continual Wo, of all ſorts: This made the clamor doleful, and almoſt perpetual. When Conſcience was gagg'd, Fancy rav'd; an unweildy and ungovernable Power, neither to be brib'd nor muzzled; till at length God thundred from Heaven upon me,

me, and Satan led me to open Execution. I doubt not but he ply'd me with theſe falſe alarms before, that he might beat up my quarters with the more Succeſs, and fall on where I was weakeſt; hoping ſometime to carry me by Storm, under covert of theſe falſe attacks; which indeed he very near effected: Ever diverting my Eye from ſeeing, and taking up the Root of the Controverſy between God and my Soul; the only true method of ſafety.

Had all this been the meer produce of diſorders in Nature, and the thence reſulting Vibrations of the Phantacy, tho' I allow their concurrency: I ſay, had all theſe been purely Mechanical, the Diſeaſe growing inveterate, had ſcarce been curable, at leaſt, I'd been very ſubject to a Relapſe. But after Means had been uſed long without Succeſs, any farther than as to abatement of the violence of ſome Symptoms; nay latterly had quite in a manner been left off; then thro' God's aſtoniſhing goodneſs I recover'd in ſuch a ſudden ſurprizing way, as indicates plainly whence the deliverance came. And for a farther Proof, and to my great comfort, I ſince have continu'd free for many Years ſucceſſively, almoſt without the leaſt moleſtation; which before I could ſcarce avoid for a few Days: What did affect me of this kind, to any degree of concern, was but for a few Minutes.

Any that obſerve the various Paſſages of my Life paſt, will plainly perceive a gradation of Sins and Judgments; which center'd finally in a deſperate complication of Sin and Miſery, with the utmoſt danger of what was infinitely worſe.

The Heavens lower'd long before the Storm began: God's Lightning preceeded his Thunder: He convinc'd and warn'd before he ſtruck home. When I contriv'd by carnal Mirth and Company to divert uneaſie Thoughts; the Clouds thickned and gathered the faſter upon me: More peculiarly ſtill after venturing on the occaſions of great Temptations, after Warnings, Vows, Reproofs, and frequenting Plays; where God arreſted me with his Terrors moſt remarkably, upon the very ſpot.

All unimprov'd, brought on thoſe Thunder-Claps, that ſtruck me to the brink of Hell. My Luſts made me forget my Duty to approach my Lord's holy Table; and after, when I complied, I prepared ſo careleſly, and drew near with ſuch a formal, unbelieving, unſanctified Heart; as I have often thought, did in a ſpecial manner draw down his Vengeance; and wondered it did not utterly conſume me; as I'm confident it has many.

How juſt was God in pointing me to that confounding Sentence, by a peculiar Providence, to leave me no room for hope, when I took Sanctuary in thoughts of longer Life, inſtead of immediate humblings; what ſo overwhelm'd me, was but a crude, unguard-

unguarded Expreſſion, that might eaſily have been ſeen thro'. But he muſt underſtand Heavens diſpleaſure at his Crimes, who reads by the light of a Ray from the Sun of Righteouſneſs, when he is very angry. My vain hopes about Futurity, were ſpun out of the bowels of Fancy; and Fancy ſwallow'd them up quick immediately: O the Juſtice of God, and the Folly bound up in my Heart!

I ſmarted the more I'm confident, for the neglect of paternal Advice; let the Rebellious conſider it, and know aſſuredly, God may be a ſlow, but will be a ſure Avenger of any degrees of ſuch unnatural contempt.

What I may ſay appertaining to thoſe dreadful and peculiar Horrors I related above, as happening to me but twice in a ſingular manner; muſt be with all humility and modeſty, as becomes me on ſo awful an occaſion. I dare not determine any thing, but only expreſs what my Apprehenſions were, while under the intolerable preſſure of them; and ſo leave the Reader to his own Judgment.

I chooſe rather to attribute them to the angry Frowns of the Almighty, the direct Rays of his Wrath, than the agency of Satan; not only becauſe the apprehenſion of his immediate hand in them, faſten'd then ſtrongly on my Spirit, but becauſe the Scriptures very much favour ſuch a Conſtruction, and ſo abundantly, as needs no quotation.

I know Scripture and Experience teſtifie Satan to be the Executioner of God's Juſtice, and ſo may be called God's Hand, as wicked Men are: And *the Rod of his Anger, and the Staff in their Hand, his Indignaion*: But notwiſtanding, *David* and *Heman* in the depth of their Diſtreſs, expreſs themſelves as having to do with God immediately; as appears from many pathetic expreſſions in ſome Pſalms. After all, let the diſpenſation be mediate or immediate, which I dare not determine; this I'm ſure of, the ſenſe of it is intollerable, and time will be much better ſpent in ſerious endeavours to avoid it, than critically to pry into the nature and manner of it. If thus from Satan, it agrees with the Notion of a Learned Man, who compares the Buffetings of Satan to ſharp Stakes Perſecutors uſed to torment Chriſtians to Death by.

Pſal. 17. 14.

Iſai. 10. 5.

ἐδόθη μοὶ σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκὶ. *In illa phraſi alluſio ſit ad ſudes illas aſſulaſq; quibus perforata ſunt corpora chriſtianorum: σκόλοψ ſudem ſignificat præacutem. Dr.* Arrowſm. *Tact. Sacr. p.* 187.

The ſowre hard thoughts I entertained of God, his Dealings and Deſigns, I queſtion not but Satan had a great hand in them: Firſt injecting them, and then ſharpening the Edge of my own Reflections, by keeping them in continual agitation. I had been too great an Enemy to Free-Grace, at leaſt in the practic Notion of it, and had thwartled much in diſpute againſt it, for the ſake of the popularity of the Arguments of the adverſe Party. And now God ſuffered the Tempter to impoſe upon me the belief of final Reprobation, as to my ſelf, in the ſevereſt ſenſe.

How

How juſt was God in ſuffering my Sore to feſter, and run in the Night? to uſe the Pſalmiſt's expreſſion; while I refus'd to have it ſearch'd to the bottom; labouring to skin it over by half Confeſſions, till at laſt in my Pangs and Agonies, as tho' extorted from me, I diſcover'd it to a very unfit Perſon, who afterward publickly made ſport with it in his Cups and Company. 'Twas the very Party that made that glorious Confeſſion in my extremity; about the Bleſſedneſs of Communion with God, preferable to a World. O the dreadful Ingratitude of that poor Creature to his God and his Friend! God forgive him, and have Mercy on him for Jeſus's ſake.

That ſtrange pacateneſs, which laſted ſeveral Days in the midſt of my Illneſs, indicates more than meer Nature was the Root of the Diſorder; and that ſudden ſeeming Cure that encourag'd me to take a Journey, and the great Change enſuing when half way, with the ſtrange Impreſſions that follow'd, confirm the ſame. Riding and a ſuppoſed agitation of Humors, were ſo far from producing this alteration, that the ſame Exerciſe has ſometimes reliev'd me: The Vigor Thoughts drove in upon me with; their continuance, and what follow'd, with many other circumſtances, prove abundantly what I drive at: beſides ſuch an Effect was no way proportion'd to the ſuppoſeable Cauſe, and had ſcarce any affinity with it: My Body was well purg'd, Alteratives us'd; and upon ſuch Preparatives, Exerciſe, this eſpecially is allow'd rather

to

to brighten, than cloud the natural Spirits.

God convinc'd me of my Folly, in overvaluing or deſpiſing Inſtruments, and not looking enough to him, who works as he pleaſes; who can blaſt the beſt, and make the meaneſt effect the greateſt things; as I found now by ſad, but very ſenſible experience.

That ridiculous Fancy obtruded with ſuch violence upon my belief, convinc'd me, who was in great part the Author of many tormenting Imaginations, which I formerly reputed the meer effect of the Spleen.

I had ſeen many years before, one under the anguiſh of Deſpair; his Body macerated, his Viſage dreadful, his Actions and Words terrifying and amazing: One of his Expreſſions was this; "Were my "Fleſh torn from my Bones with red hot "Pincers, 'twould be Eaſe compared to the "anguiſh of my Mind. I made no uſe of this fair warning, till God caſt me into the Furnace, to feel what I did not enough believe, *viz.* how terrible Guilt, Temptation, terrors of Conſcience, and the Wrath of God were.

All thoſe ſtrange Words, Actions, Senſations, that brought me to ſuch extremity; are a full proof what Power Satan had over me: I as firmly believe it as if I had ſeen him; and have as full and demonſtrative a proof to my Senſe, by ſome extraordinary Operations I felt, but can't to the Life expreſs; as tho' he had appear'd

pear'd to me. How can this reaſonably be ſuppoſed imputable to the activity of Fancy, wound high by fear and expectation? If this were a juſt Plea, why was not the effect anſwerable, in the very Method Fancy preſcrib'd and expectation ſuggeſted? which is ever the natural Iſſue of all fanciful Motions.

If this be true, as doubtleſs it is, and muſt be granted by all the Rules of Experience, ever the beſt Guide, as being the genuine proceſs, and moſt apt and natural concluſion of all the Movements of Imagination; why then did I not ſee the Devil, which I fully expected, but feel him, which I ne'er thought of? The Providence of God ſo order'd it, as quite to croſs the Stream of Fancy; a thing never known, when that is the ſole Agent.

Whence came all thoſe ſtrange Expreſſions, Geſtures, Operations, Influences, all exactly conſpiring to ſuch a ſad End and Deſign, as would plainly appear by a relation of particulars; and that without the leaſt previous apprehenſion of any ſuch matter either in general or particular? And yet that all theſe Paſſages ſhould orderly ſucceed one another, till they center'd in ſuch a malicious Event? The Matter in all its particularities and circumſtances, I hinted in the Relation but in general terms; but were the Reader as fully appriz'd of the thing as it was in reality; I would not queſtion his aſſent.

The

The whole Scene was full of the moſt hideous ſpiteful Blaſphemy, that the Wit of Men or Devils could deviſe: And tho' the Heart of Man be pregnant enough with wickedneſs, yet I can't conceive it able to vent ſuch things at random, that carry ſuch a Face of exquiſite Contrivance, and moſt malicious Deſign: at the ſame time horrors and reluctancy expreſſing themſelves with the utmoſt deteſtation of the Fact.

Many Years before, I had an itch upon me to ſee a Spirit, as they uſually Phraſe it: How juſtly then might God now have given the foul Fiend commiſſion to have made his appearance, to my infinite Terror? What a Monſter is Unbelief and Curioſity? To what dangers do they expoſe us? Should God grant all our mad, fooliſh Wiſhes, we need no more to ruin us: but Praiſed be his holy Name; in Judgment he remembred Mercy: Tho' he ſuffered him to expreſs his rage otherwiſe, yet he reſtrain'd him in this Point: Tho' the other Method is no leſs real, yet this was more formidable; and as circumſtances then ſtood, might have undone me had God permitted it. Notwithſtanding I deſire to read his Juſtice in what happened, for my idle Talk about the Devil; declaring confidently Temptation to be more from the Devil within; as many do, who have no more practic ſenſe of his Being and Operations, than as if all related of him, was a mere idle Story: For this, together with my former curioſity,

I be-

I believe God now chaſtized me; as well as for my many other grievous Provocations.

Men of looſe Faith and Morals, upon Diſcourſes of this nature, will often, in a careleſs manner, pretend to thank God they never ſaw any thing worſe than themſelves; when their Lives and formal way of expreſſing themſelves, intimate they are ſo far from any ſenſe of ſuch a Mercy, that they rather ſeem thus to expreſs their Infidelity and Prophanity. Much more boldly, will ſome diſcloſe their Opinions, even with inſolent demands and ſcoffs, expreſſing the confidence of their Unbelief in this kind. Satan has faſt hold of ſuch, and will ne'er attempt to undecive them till it's too late: To which purpoſe *Wierus* has a memorable Paſſage, which he had from one preſent: An Exorciſt made ſome bold challenges to the Devil, being put to a ſtand in ſome Enterprize: The Devil anſwered in Latin: *Quem pleno jure in poſtremo die poſſidebo, quid opus eſt illum tentare?* *De Præſtig. Dem. p.* 596.

Let none ſay, I lay all on the Devil in the Myſtery of Temptation; I diſclaim ſuch pretences. This would look like a piece of ſelf-juſtification, loathſome in the ſight of a holy jealous God: No, we may falſly accuſe him, but never thereby vindicate our ſelves. St. *James* tells us plainly; that a *Man is tempted, when drawn away of his own Luſt and enticed*: And certainly we have corruption enough within us to ruin us, were there no Devil without to tempt

tempt us. But then it muſt be own'd, if we hoiſt Sail, he'll be ſure to fill it with a brisk Gale. If we ſtrike Fire by the colliſion of luſtful Thoughts: either at his inſtigation, or from our own natural promptitude; he'll without fail blow the Coals and ſpread the Fire as the Wind does the Flames, till they conſume us and all about us.

Cruel Bloody-minded Men, are like thoſe among the Tombs poſſeſs'd with Devils, exceeding fierce, ſo that none can come within their reach with ſafety: Whence came elſe thoſe helliſh Torments Perſecutors in all Ages have deviſ'd, that a Fiend cou'd ſcarce outdo them? And what are impure Libertines, but *Gaderene* Hogs poſſeſs'd by unclean Devils, hurrying them down Precipices, into the dead Sea of impurity? Call this Poſſeſſion, Obſeſſion, or what you pleaſe, he has full Power over them, to draw them into all Wickedneſs. What a Learned Man ſays of ſome giddy headed Hereticks, is applicable to theſe Men: "I dare ſay, a Man "may find out a greater number of true De- "moniacks among them, than Chriſt or his "Apoſtles are ſaid to Cure.

Dr. Moore's *Myſt. of Godl. p.* 111.

Thus by degrees, are Men led Captive by Satan at his pleaſure. And who can eject the ſtrong Man arm'd, till a ſtronger than he come? None can reſcue any out of the Clutches of this Leviathan, but the Arm of the Almighty. 'Tis certainly his great Artifice to keep us in Ignorance of his Power, and our Sins that expoſe

us to it. We can't ſuppoſe Convictions come from him, who loves to keep us nodding in ſecurity: It's the Office we know of the holy Spirit deſcrib'd in Scripture; but when that Bleſſed one ſhines with a ſtrong Ray into a dark guilty Soul, what a Hell of Torment is there in the Conſcience, till he reveal the only Remedy, Chriſt Crucified? And now it's Satan's ſeaſon to aggravate Sin, to accuſe and exaſperate Conſcience: A poor Creature can ſcarce bear the weight of the Reflexions of his own Mind; and if Satan now be permitted to mix his Brimſtone with the Fire of Conſcience, how will it ſmother out the laſt ſpark of Hope, and ſoure and canker the Soul, with impious Thoughts and hatred of God himſelf?

I now expect the fate that attends Narratives of this kind. It's now a days become faſhionable to doubt of theſe matters: Weakneſs and Credulity being often imputed to ſuch as do but heſitate. If they don't immediately explode all as Dream and Fancy, they are rank'd among the Simple, that believe every thing. To appear ſingular out of the modiſh dreſs of the Times, ſome think derives obſervation and contempt. This makes ſome of good Character, affect the Terms of the Men of Senſe; to make too bold with the Language of the Sceptick Party. The World is full of Wickedneſs and Forgery; many idle Stories have been trump'd up and obtruded upon credulous People, by weak or wicked Men; and becauſe there

there is counterfeit Coin, ſome ſcruple good Mony. If Men will act thus unreaſonably, I'll take comfort and acquieſce in the faithful diſcharge of my Duty.

Others again, to leave no Stone of Ingratitude unturn'd, will retort and ſay, I have taken pains to expoſe my Self. But let ſuch know without farther reply; that I have received too much at the Hand of the Bleſſed God, to ſtick at building his Honour on the Ruins of my own. Do thou *that ſtandeſt, take heed leſt* thou *fall*; *be not high minded, but Fear*, let the Advice of the Holy Ghoſt ſoften, if it prevail not quite to ſtop the Mouth of thy Cenſure. Remember there are dumb Devils as well as noiſie ones, and many are led captive by them, that hear no gingling of their Chains. Devils don't always tare People they Poſſeſs, tho' ſometimes they do at their departure. 'Tis their intereſt to conceal their Being and Power as much as may be, unleſs on ſome ſpecial occaſions they are forc'd either by an over-ruling Hand of Providence, or in the Execution of their Fury.

I doubt not but the Devil had a hand in idle Stories of his own Appearance; or that of Ghoſts, as uſually term'd; on purpoſe to confound what has been real of that kind: A dexterous Exploit, in which he certainly finds his Earnings; many on theſe falſe Rumors, being more confirm'd in their Sadduciſm; and many good People become ſhaken in the Practic Notion at leaſt of theſe things: Wicked Men

Men act in this Caſe quite contrary to what they do in Lying: They tell Lies ſo long, till they believe them true; but accounts of Apparitions, till they believe all falſe. But O my Soul, take heed the impure Spirit return not, and find the *Houſe ſwept and garniſh'd, and he take unto him ſeven worſer Spirits than himſelf, and ſo thy laſt State be worſe than thy firſt.* Lord Jeſus, who haſt all Power, prevent it, I beſeech thee, for thy Mercies ſake. *Amen.*

Men generally run too deep into Mechanical Principles in their ſolutions of ſome Symptoms incident to caſes of Melancholy, and ſome in this and every thing elſe, approve themſelves perfect Materialiſts. As the Atomick Philoſophy is of excellent uſe in the explication of the Phainomena of Nature, when God and his Providence are taken in; but without them the rankeſt nonſence; ſo in all Melancholy caſes, Phyſick and the Sons of Art, are of admirable uſe, if juſt allowances are made, with ſuitable Proviſion for diabolical Temptations; but without them in moſt caſes, tho' not all, both Agent and Patient, will find themſelves miſerably in the dark. Mr. *Greatrax* the Stroaker, in his account of the Cures he made, attributes ſome Diſeaſes conjecturally to Evil Spirits, from ſome odd Symptoms he obſerved in their Cure, particularly of the Falling-Sickneſs. Much more may we ſuſpect them in Melancholy caſes; to a Proverb call'd, *Diaboli Balneum.*

Cauſabon *of* Enthus. *p.* 81. *2d. Edit.*

A Learned Man has the following Expreſſions. "When in matter of Diſeaſes, "we oppoſe natural Cauſes to ſupernatu- "ral, whether Divine or Diabolical; as "we exclude not the general Will of God, "without which nothing can be; So nei- "ther the general Miniſtry, and Interven- "tion of the Devil, who, for ought I know, "may have a hand in all or moſt Diſeaſes, "to which Mortal Man (thro' Sin) is na- "turally liable." And a few Lines on "ſup- "poſes a general concurrence or inter- "vention of the Devil, in all that is E- "vil, whether Natural or Moral.

Some Good Men I meet with ſtrangely warp'd by Philoſophick Notions, even into a neglect of thoſe cautions, their Chriſtian Principles preſcribe them. They eaſily overlook the agency of the Devil, in all but ſome notorious Inſtances; as tho' under-ground Deſigns were of leſs pernicious conſequence, or nothing was to be believed, but what our Senſes put out of diſpute.

By this Method they weaken one another, in their care and watchfulneſs, careleſs Opinions begetting careleſs Practices; while juſt and right ones are the Mothers of caution and preſervation; and thus the common Enemy gets many Advantages. Much I know is written to excellent purpoſe on this Subject, to improvement of our circumſpection: But alas! few read them or duly conſider them; ſo take up with a uſeleſs Notion, and when they apply it to particular Inſtances, the

ſtrength

ſtrength of the Argument is quite loſt; and what was applauded in the Theory, evaporates in the application; the force of all being generally evaded, unleſs in ſome more barefac'd aſtoniſhing Precedents.

'Tis of the laſt conſequence to take this Diſtemper in time; for if Melancholy fix and get rooting, 'tis hard to remove. Penſive thoughts impriſoned multiply; Shame and reſervedneſs, natural to the Diſtemper, plead for ſecrecy; but if they prevail, endanger ſafety. Small helps in Phyſick do more at firſt, than the greateſt when grown inveterate. Preſume not to wreſtle it out by delay; thoſe hopes too often are vain; and ſuch as thus think to prevail, frequently bring themſelves to great extremities: Give then the infernal Engineer, no time to form his Fire-works.

When the Diſtemper has got head, the following Temptations are very uſual, either ſome or all.

1. To think all we have done in Religion, is meer provocation to God, and contributive to the load of his diſpleaſure. This Temptation bore hard upon me, as oft as I reflected on the Woes in Scripture denounced againſt Hypocriſie. That and Prophanity, if the Hypocriſie be groſs, are both alike founded in Infidelity; the one denies God ſecretly, the other openly; and which is worſe, the Day of Judgment will determine. But there is a more refin'd Hypocriſie Men are inſenſible of in

themſelves; a moral ſincerity, if I may ſo call it, in oppoſition to an Evangelical one; I mean a preſumptive one, not gracious and ſaving: The Cries of meer Nature are better than none, much more the Voice of common Grace; a Man with the Means might have done better, but if he did ſomething, 'tis better than, by neglect and contempt of God, to refuſe all fealty to him: To repent therefore of this, is interpretively to wiſh, we had openly denounced War againſt God, and bid defiance to him; ſo muſt be a ſtrong Temptation.

2. To ſuppoſe Prayer uſeleſs, and God inexorable. This cuts off all intercourſe with Heaven, while it prevails, and ſtops the very breath of the ſpiritual Life in the Soul. Expect him to ply this Oar with diligence; as well knowing of what conſequence it is, to the Succeſs of his cruel Deſign. Break thro' it then with a holy violence, and gallantry of obſtinate Reſolution as for your Life, maugre all oppoſition: Pray as you can, tho' in the moſt broken Language; God will underſtand and accept the deſires of your Heart, the beſt part of Prayer; nay of a ſigh expreſs'd that you can't do better; tho' you chatter as a Crane, with *Hezekiah*, it will not fail of acceptance: The ſenſe of your unworthineſs, will promote your Humility; and difficulty, will render the Attempt more pleaſing; and what's more grateful to him than ſuch a diſpoſition?

Bleſſed

Bleſſed be God, Satan did not prevail in this Point, till I came to the laſt extremity.

3. To caſt off the Yoke of God, and turn Libertine, and bid adieu to all hope of Heaven. This is all over Devilliſm, and bears the trueſt Print of the Cloven-Foot. He thus far prevail'd with me, ſo as to wiſh I might have ſome eaſe here, and get from under the Power of God's Wrath, whatever became of me hereafter. A curſed Wiſh, I have often pray'd backward, and beg moſt heartily God would ne'er lay it to my Charge, : And now ſay with that holy Man; *Hic ure, hic ſeca, domine, modo parcas in Eternum.*

4. If none of theſe faſten; his laſt and ſtrongeſt, is to make away your ſelf, and hide your Head and Troubles in the Duſt. This is a Plot againſt your Soul and Body, to get immediate poſſeſſion to Torment: And as this Deſign moſt comports with his bloody purpoſe, who is skilful to deſtroy, ſo expect, when occaſion ſerves, he'll urge this with greateſt violence. Know that this is Murther of the worſt ſort, admit not then a thought about it; reject his firſt ſuggeſtion with abhorrence; if you parley, he'll take it for a degree of compliance; 'twill fluſh him with hope, and make him redouble the Aſſault to your greater Terror or Deſtruction: Remember God ſtands by to obſerve you; to be your Second if you'll but Fight; and if you are ſo diſpos'd in earneſt, ſhew it by giving no advantage to the Enemy;

but immediately reſiſt the firſt Onſet. If you enter into debate, 'tis a degree of aſſent, a turning the back in Fight; then Woe betide you if God turn from you and deſert you, as you do his Cauſe and your own. Call in help, and 'twill diſcourage him and abate the force of the Temptation.

I knew one who took this Advice, and thereby, thro' God's aſſiſtance, eſcaped the ſnare, when all was ready for execution. This ſore and dreadful Temptation, thro' the unparallell'd campaſſion of my Bleſſed Maſter, was never in the leaſt degree mine; an inſtance ne'er enough to be admir'd of the amazing goodneſs of God, conſidering the length of my Diſtreſs: But by what I felt of Satan's Power in other Temptations, I can eaſily gueſs at the ſtrength of this. And I wiſh I had the Skill and Might of a Seraphim, to Sing his Praiſe for ſo great a Deliverance; and let the pious Reader ſay, *Amen.*

5. There is one more I might mention, as cautionary to ſome, which gall'd me extreamly; 'tis this: When I thought of our Saviour's Woe denounced againſt ſuch as offend any of his little ones; it had more than the weight of a Mill-Stone to ſink me deeper in the Sea of Deſpair. O what ſtinging thoughts did the apprehenſion of ſeducing any of God's Children create in my Breaſt! 'Twas like freſh Fuel to the devouring Flames of Conſcience. Let ſuch conſider it well, as boldly partake in others Mens Sins, without

out Caution or Remorſe; who, as if they were in ſtrict League with Hell, approve themſelves tempting Imps, and Factors to the Devil; as if they coveted a double Damnation. How glad are ſome if they can Proſelyte any to Wickedneſs, and Liſt them in the Devil's Service? Little do ſuch conſider how they heap Coals of Fire on their own Heads; when they draw a good Man into Sin, it pleaſes them beſt, tho' 'twill one day coſt them deareſt; which ſhews plainly what Spirit acts them; that they are of their Father the Devil, and will do his drudgery. I know it is very incidental to corrupt Nature, to affect Brethren in Iniquity and Suffering, if it muſt be; but ſuch will certainly find the contrary effect in Hell; not one jot of Eaſe, but infinitely more Torment.

To my ſhame let it be expreſs'd; that this bedlam thought once boy'd me up in my wandrings, *viz.* That I was not ſo bad as others; that if I went to Hell, ſuch and ſuch would; forgetting all this while, that my place might be hotter than theirs, as ſinning againſt more Light and Means; and that it was more like a Fiend, than a Man or a Chriſtian, to take any comfort in a Partnerſhip of Miſery: As many Faggots make the Fire burn the fiercer, ſo the damned enrage one anothers Miſeries, and make the burning Tophet the more intolerable. Lord lay not this Sin to my Charge, but accept my Confeſſion for Chriſt ſake. *Amen.*

Let none from their Innocency, or Conſtitution, preſume of an indemnity from attacks of this nature: When the Trial comes, the beſt find matter for an accuſing Conſcience; and Jolly, Sanguine Temperaments have been arreſted: Prepare then for what may be in your golden Seaſons; and to this end, learn to handle your Spiritual Weapons: lay in a ſtock of knowledge from Scripture, the great Armory; and peruſe other ſerious Books on the ſame Subject.

Aiery, vegete Tempers have been terribly accoſted and quite perverted; let none then pretend exemption. Guilt makes many cry out of the Spleen, who are naturally antipodes to it, in their temperament: The Hippo is a faſhionable Term of Art, and the pretence to it is often a ſculking hole to conceal horrors of Conſcience. Some in a ſerious mood, I have known to acknowledge it for themſelves and their fraternity.

To ſuch as are under the power of deſpondent thoughts, I'd recommend the reading the two Books expreſs'd in the Margin. Among the many Treatiſes on that Subject, I found none gave that ſtay to my Spirit, that they ſometimes did; they being excellently contrived to ſuit the worſt caſes ſuppoſeable: a ſure method to prepare a Plaſter as broad as the Sore: For it ſeems a Symptom eſſential to the Diſtemper, to ſuppoſe the worſt that's poſſible. There's *another lately Printed, of great uſe before, in, and after

A Child of Light walking in Darkneſs.

Gods thoughts and ways above ours, &c.

* *A Diſcourſe of Trouble of Mind.*

ter theſe circumſtances, which I read with great ſatisfaction. It deſcribes very truly the Treatment requiſite for Perſons in ſuch caſes, juſtly cenſuring ſevere and rigid Management; in which the Author's and my own Experience, heartily concur: There are many very uſeful things in it.

Charity, we are told, is the bond of perfectneſs, and that without it all our Profeſſion is nothing: But there ſeems too little of it among ſuch as can't bear with little differences without an open Rupture. 'Tis no doubt a grateful Spectacle to the common Enemy, to ſee Men oppoſe one another, or refuſe mutual Aſſiſtance; but I hope I need not perſuade any under the Calamity I'm diſcourſing of, to try any uſeful helps that may come from the hands of Perſons of a different Perſuaſion: I ſuppoſe the Man upon the Rack will kiſs the officious Hand that will take him down, and ne'er ſtand upon niceties.

" O Lord, who haſt taught us that all " our doings without Charity are " nothing worth; Send thy holy Ghoſt, and " pour into our Hearts that moſt excel- " lent Gift of Charity, the very bond of " Peace and of all Vertues, without " which whoſoever liveth is counted " dead before thee. Grant this for thine " only Son Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.*

To ſupply the brevity of the Reflections, I think fit to ſubjoin ſomething by way of Objection and Anſwer; to anticipate, if poſſible,

poſſible, thoſe of the Reader. I only premiſe this. That I ſuppoſe my ſelf debating with ſuch as own they have Immortal Souls, the Being and Operations of Spirits; for it's not a Place to diſpute theſe Principles.

Object. I. You gave Inſtances of idle Fears and Whimſies, in the Firſt part; which are known to be the natural effects of meer Melancholy, as Heat is of Fire, or a Phrenſie of a Fever; and what you make ſo much of in the Second, ſeems but a more confirm'd State of the ſame Diſtemper; and yet you attribute all to Supernatural Cauſes. This is the way to confound things; to bring the Devil into every thing, to nullifie ſecond cauſes and effects; to confirm Scepticks, the Devil is nothing but a mad Fancy that brings him into every thing.

Anſw. Mens Opinions alter not the Properties of things; they are what they really are, let Men think as they pleaſe. If aſcribing too much to Supernatural Agents has this tendency, will aſcribing too little mend the matter? or forbearance make ſuch Men better? Suppoſe weak Arguments of this kind to have done ſome injury, have ſolutions attempted ſolely by Mechanical Cauſes done leſs? I ſee no neceſſity of either extream, and as a Friend to Truth, would avoid both. What Fancy and Fear can effect, in producing Diſtempers and even Death, is notorious. *Experim. Philoſ.* Mr. *Boyle* gives an inſtance of a Captain, whoſe Hair turn'd Grey in a Night, from ſtrong

ſtrong apprehenſions of Execution next Morning. If the violent Emotions of natural Powers of the Mind, or corporeal Faculties, can thus alter or over-ſet Nature; what Chriſtian dare wholly ſeclude or nicely determine the agency of inviſible Powers, in mixing their Impreſſes with ſuch natural movements, or mimicking them from beginning to end, thro' the whole Proceſs of any ſuch Operation? *Dæmones morbos ut plurimum inferunt Melancholicos: & p.* 332. *Inſinuunt ſe nonnunquam corporibus hominum, & occulte in viſceribus operti, valetudinem vitiant, mentes furoribus quatiunt.* *Hor. ſubſc. p. 6. cent. prim. Camerar.* The Caſe of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Job*, and *Herod*, the Scriptures make ſingular, had ne'er been reputed ſo, but for their Teſtimony: Boils and Worms are the iſſues of natural Diſeaſes; and Melancholy may bebrute a Man; change his way of Life and Manners, even into a beſtial degeneracy. Storms blow down Houſes; and Lightening conſumes Man and Beaſt naturally; and Robbers as freely fall upon their Prey; and yet we are expreſly told, theſe were Judgments inflicted by inviſible Agents, the reſt at their inſtigation. The Peſtilence ſprings from natural Cauſes, yet is called *plaga Dei*, and is often in Scripture ſaid to be the effect of his immediate Hand. That the Devil could impreſs the Elements and temperament of the Body is plain: And tho' he be much reſtrain'd ſince the times of the Goſpel; yet we find ſome ſince under Excommunication, given over to Satan for deſtruction of the Fleſh:

Fleſh: And we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe that effect now ceaſed, where it's duly perform'd. I little thought of Temptation, till extremities convinc'd me, and the circumſtances of my Recovery, to which I refer the judicious; that, and what I ſaid before, I hope ſufficiently obviate the Objection.

Object. II. Opiates, you grant, reliev'd you; want of regular management diſtreſs'd you; that you was ſeiz'd with great diſorders in the midſt of your Journey, tho' you ſet out calm: Are not theſe the genuine effects of Matter and Motion? When the Blood and Spirits are low, and Fancy active, uſually People have ſtrange apprehenſions of themſelves and things. Long or violent Exerciſe exhauſts the Spirits, eſpecially after diſuſe and weakneſs of Body: And all theſe circumſtances concurring in your Caſe, 'tis evident you can't eaſily get clear of the force of the Argument.

Anſw. I confeſs it harder to convince others than my ſelf, ſince I can't appriſe them of ſome Particularities and Senſations I'm conſcious of; nor can I cloath the words I expreſs matters by with that energy and feeling ſenſe the things themſelves were convey'd to me; ſo muſt acquieſce in the various opinions that are like to paſs, according to Mens different Principles and Sentiments. I acknowledge the Allegations to be juſt in many caſes, but not mine, which I know to be uncommon. I own we are all too indulgent of our ſelves, and eaſily grow opini-

ative

ative of what we do or ſuffer: Self-love blinds us, inſpiring us with partiality, and over-weaning imaginations, which render it a uſual attempt to ſet up for ſingularity: And I wiſh we cou'd all more dethrone that Idol. If what I ſay prove not convictive, upon a juſt remonſtrance, were I in a capacity, all I ſaw reaſonable ſhould be retracted. Let ſuch modeſt ſuppoſitions then ſome way atone for my adherence to Convictions, when I appear peremptory; for as I ought certainly to obey them, ſo I here once for all ſolemnly declare, I follow them. I refer the Reader to what I ſaid on this Topick in the Reflections. All I think needful to add, is, that as I accounted there for the uſe of Opiates, if the Argument hold, it does for management, and all *&c*'s of that nature. I touch'd there alſo on Exerciſe, and what probably might be the effect of it in my caſe. I'll back all with the following Conſiderations. The Ancients ſpeak mighty things of the power of Muſick to cure many Diſeaſes and Paſſions both of Body and Mind. The *Thebans* cur'd Diſtempers by the uſe of the Pipe. *A. Gell.* ſays, it cures the Sciatica, and *Galen* calls it καταυλεῖν τὸ πτπ̃, *loca dolentia decantare*. *Picus Mirand.* ſays, Muſick moves the Spirits to act upon the Soul, as Medicaments do to operate upon the Body; and it cures the Body by the Soul, as Phyſick does the Soul by the Body. Phyſicians apply Remedies to Patients under trouble of Conſcience, and in caſes of ſuppoſed Poſſeſſi-

on

on or Witchcraft; tho' ſome look no farther than the meer diſorders of Nature, yet many practiſe on other grounds, as believing ſuch things, and the Soul to be immaterial. *Baglivi* in his Diſſertation of the *Tarantula*, gives us curious Obſervations about the Muſical Cure of the Bite of it. We find of what efficacy the Harp was in driving the Evil Spirit away from *Saul*: nay, of what uſe Muſick was to ſuch as were inſpired by the Spirit of God, appears by *Eliſha*; when the Minſtrel play'd, the hand of the Lord came upon him. St. *Matt.* makes the Lunatick and the Poſſeſs'd the ſame, Chap 17. yet ſeems to diſtinguiſh them, Chap. 4. 24. The Learned *Camero* reconciles it thus: *Luna non agit ita in corpora, ut hoc aut illud effectum conſequatur, niſi quia jam corpus ſic affectum eſt, ut luna hoc vel illud efficiat; cum ergo diabolus ita afficit corpus, ut reddat illud tali lunæ operationi obnoxium, idem eſt,* * δαιμονιζόμενος & σεληνιαζόμενος, *Lunaticus & Arreptitius. Quod dæmones id poſſint facere ex eo patet, quod quæ dæmon facit in corporibus noſtris interdum ſint ejuſmodi, ut remediis quibus corpus efficitur, minui poſſint: nam ita clarum fit dæmonem ſic agere ut immutet duntaxat temperamentum corporis.* Theſe things laid together, and duly conſidered, I hope what I have advanced about Opiates, *&c.* may not appear prepoſterous, ſuppoſing ſomething more than meer Nature concern'd.

2 King. 3. 15.

Vid. pl. in Prælect. ad Mat.

* *Dæmone agit at us.*

The remaining part of the Objection appertaining chiefly to matter of fact, I declare it to be this. Riding I was habituated

bituated to all my Life: and tho' Nature was much lower now than ordinary, thro' Terrors and want of the regular refreſhments of Sleep and Diet, yet upon every conſiderable relaxation, I found my Mind as clear as ever, and my Body able to bear the fatigue of a moderate Journey, being naturally of a robuſt Conſtitution. In ſhort, I felt little laſſitude, ſcarce ſo much as was uſual, and my Thoughts, call them Fancy, Invention, or what you pleaſe, were employ'd moſtly how to make my Peace with God, till Terrors broke in upon me. That Stay given my Spirit, I mention'd, as ſenſibly and remarkably withdrew as it was given; which none can judge of, as I that felt it, which I relate with faithfulneſs; and if my word can't be relied on, 'tis in vain to argue the Point farther. I was under no intoxications from Narcoticks, or that lowneſs of Spirits, which fills ſome with idle Fanſies, and waking Dreams; like the fearful *Burgundians Phil. de Comines* ſpeaks of, who miſtaking Thiſtles for Lances, were ſtruck with the Panick. I dwell the longer on this Subject the Objection being ſo material. I conclude with an expreſſion out of *Camero*. *Pomponatius non rectè concluſit nullam eſſe Dæmonis efficaciam, quod vidiſſet multorum morbos, qui videbantur eſſe à Dæmone, levatos curatione medicâ: nam cum Diabolus agat in corpora noſtra pro ratione temperamenti, & conſtitutionis, effecta ejus poſſunt minui, & augeri, prout alteratur temperamentum.*

Book 1. *Ch.* 11.

Præl. p. 55.

You

Object. III. You pretend to give us two peculiar Inſtances of ſtrange wrathful impreſſions, as you ſuppoſe more immediately from God; and yet tell us, you made no Reflexions at that time. 'Tis ſcarce poſſible to conceive of any thing without ſome kind of Reflexion, eſpecially on ſo awful an occaſion: But not to lie at the ketch for an unwary expreſſion, may not all this be ſolv'd by the Laws of Mechaniſm? Muſt we run to the World of Spirits for ſolutions for every ſurprizing act of Nature? Theſe are rather the Pleas of Lazineſs and Superſtition, than the effects of Induſtry and ſound Knowledge; an eaſy way to account for every thing. When the Spirits in the Brain have been long agitated by intenſe thinking Night and Day, they muſt needs diſorder the other fluids of the Body, breed a Stagnation and Indigeſtion, which encreaſes the viſcid acidity of the Blood, ſo renders the Diſtemper more inveterate; till poſſibly the Spirits get a pungency, like *Aqua Fortis*. Add to this, the Spaſms of the *Fibrillæ* of the Brain, and the diſorders of the Animal Spirits (if *Neotericks* will allow the Phraſe) productive of irregular Motions, forcing them into new Tracks, together with the unuſual impreſſions of the long uſe of Opiates. I demand now, whether this and much more that might be urg'd to the ſame purpoſe, is not ſufficient to ſolve the preſent Phainomena?

I hope

I hope the demand is no leſs precari- Anſw.
ous, to ſuppoſe there is ſuch a thing to be felt as the Wrath of God in this World. I ask then, how any under the inflictions of this Wrath, who deſired to expreſs a ſenſe of it, ſhould accommodate himſelf to the capacities of ſuch as ne'er felt it, ſo as to obtain credit, and leave no grounds of Exception? Words afford but feeble Ideas of things, that fall not under the Senſes; what a vaſtly different ſenſe has he of the Gout or Stone that has felt a Paroxiſm from him that has only receiv'd the livelieſt deſcriptions of them? *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear*, ſays *Job* to God, *but now I ſee thee, I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes.* The terrors of an angry God are moſt emphatically deſcrib'd in Scripture: But, O what an unconceivable difference is there, when he glares upon us with ſome real Rays of his diſpleaſure! how overwhelming and aſtoniſhing are they? Who can ſee him and live, or feel his anger and ſupport themſelves, unleſs he under-prop the Soul, by putting underneath his everlaſting Arm? How many that ne'er felt the miſery of the Spleen, laugh at others under the extremities of it, as the ſilly thing call'd Vapors, the meer product of an idle Fancy? Yet it is as real a Diſeaſe as a Fever, and often eats out the comfort of the Patient's Life: And did theſe Sanguine Gentlemen know the terror of the encounter, they'd be fuller of Pity than Cenſure. Many make a jeſt of the Wrath to come, that muſt feel

it in good earneſt for ever: And ſome, that I hope ne'er will taſt it, believe it ſo much to come, as if no drops of it fell in time: As if they more conſulted *Hippocrates*, or *Des Cartes*, than Caſuiſts, Commentators, Hiſtories, or even the Book of God it ſelf. What hopeful encouragements have I then for what I offer? My only comfort is, tho' I miſs my aim, I hope I ſhall not loſe my labour, while there is a God above, that meaſures us more by the deſires of our Hearts, than the Succeſs of our Enterprizes: The former is our proper Province, the latter his ſole Prerogative.

As to my meaning, when I ſay I had no Reflexions, 'tis obvious, *viz.* that I had no previous or concomitant ones, that might be thought to produce ſo ſtrange an effect: Some I muſt have: What I had before I ſignify'd; and what I had at the time, God knows they were paſt expreſſion ſad. As to the remains of the Objection; 'tis the uſual harangue on theſe Topicks, which is endleſs pro and con; and when all is ſaid, it's eaſily evaded by a ready Wit and volatile Fancy: Phyſick and Philoſophy are much in the dark, as well as ſome things in Divinity, eſpecially theſe abſtruſer Points about Temptation: I therefore ſuperſede it here, as having touch'd upon the moſt material part of it, and refer it to the candid and judicious to reconcile fairly if they can, ſome Paſſages meerly to ſuch Principles; tho' I deny

deny not the Objection to have its weight in ſome caſes.

I find you dubious about the origin of thoſe two ſtrange impreſſions juſt mention'd, whether from God or Satan. Not that I find fault with modeſty ſo expreſs'd; ſince 'twould look like a daring piece of Folly to pretend to determine it, ſuppoſing they were really ſupernatural: But I obſerve one that came to you in your diſtreſs, declin'd Praying with you, tho' you entreated him. Now what cou'd make a Man you expreſs ſo favourable an opinion of, refuſe ſuch an act of Charity, but that he thought you almoſt or quite diſtracted, and then your caſe is plain? for had he thought you your ſelf, tho' in ill-hands, the Obligation redoubled upon him to comply. And is not Bleeding another indication you was too much tranſported? Object. IV.

Had you quarrell'd with me for indetermination in ſo nice a point; I ſhou'd think you in the ſame circumſtances you ſuppoſe I was: But ſince you talk rationally, I'll give you as candid a reply, and all the ſatisfaction the caſe will bear, where another's ſentiments are concern'd as well as my own. The indications you lay ſo great a ſtreſs upon, are plauſible, but by no means concluſive, unleſs you cou'd be ſure, there was no other reaſon to determine the non-compliance of the Party; a concluſion I ſuppoſe you will not ſtand by. And to ſhew you there was, I'll produce one, I verily believe to be the true Anſw.

one, if behaviour and expreſſions may paſs for the beſt Index of the Mind; which was this: He told me the Blaſphemous expreſſions were not mine; and appear'd ſtrangely affected with my State, even to trembling; ſeeming abſolutely to deſpair of me upon all conſiderations, tho' I gave proofs to all about me, that I was perfectly my ſelf at that time. I pretend not to vindicate his refuſal, being in Orders, which makes it appear more groſs, tho' I have apologiz'd for it. As for Bleeding, I ſuppoſe the Phyſician took his indications from the acrimony of the Blood, which he hop'd to rectifie, by taking ſome of it away. Violent Symptoms of this kind, appear'd from the excoriation of ſome parts of the Body; and he ſeconded his Endeavours by proper Alteratives. So far was I from extravagant Motions that might ſuggeſt the neceſſity of ſuch an Operation, that I lay ſottiſh and ſtupid: And if he had an Eye more immediately to the Circulation of the Blood, it ſeems more natural to ſuppoſe he aim'd at quickning rather than repreſſing it.

Object. V. Strange Geſtures and blaſphemous Expreſſions, you intimate as the winding up as it were of this dreadful Tragedy: Here your Argument ſeems to come to a head, and you lay much ſtreſs upon it, ſuppoſing it muſt be concluſive to the World, that there are ſuch things as Evil Spirits, whoſe Malice and Power is extreamly formidable. But alas you forget your Senſes are as ſubject to fallacy and deluſions

of

of this kind, as your inward Senſations of ſomething extraordinary were before. Don't *Burton* and many other Authors, that Write of Melancholy, give you ſtrange Precedents of the Strength of Imagination, as to what Men thought themſelves to ſee, and feel, to be, and do? In ſhort, you're obnoxious in this Point, to all the Cavils aforeſaid.

What you ſay of that Author's relations, is as true as what he ſays of the Power of Devils to cauſe Diſeaſes; where he expreſſes Mens forwardneſs to laugh at and deſpiſe all accounts of their Beings and Operations, tho' ne'er ſo ſolemnly atteſted, aſſerting at the ſame time, that they can work upon Body and Mind from Experience. And I think it an irrefragable Argument that Devils not only can do ſo, but that they uſually work according to the diſpoſition of the Body; becauſe where Melancholy is natural and hereditary, Perſons are found obnoxious to moſt violent Temptations; and if ſo, 'tis clear of what uſe Phyſical means are in ſuch Caſes. To confound Temptation now with meer ſadneſs of Spirit, and its dreadful effects with thoſe of meer Mechanical Principles, is to talk like *Ariſtotle*, more than St. *Paul*, and tranſlate the Chriſtian dialect into Heathen gibberiſh. I own Devils can pervert nature by Permiſſion without the leaſt natural preindiſpoſitions, ſo can ſuperinduce the deepeſt Melancholy on the moſt florid Sanguine Temper; but

Anſw.

Burt. Mel. *p.* 39. *ad fin.*

we muſt not make extraordinary Caſes the ſtandard of his Commiſſion. This by the by, I reply now more directly.

Thoſe things are as ſtrange as true, and I confeſs I lay much ſtreſs upon them, and hope they'll affect me as long as I live; but as to convincing the World, I have little expectation, but rather ſeek to diſcharge my Conſcience, and expreſs my gratitude to my great Benefactor. I'm too ſenſible of the ſcurvy treatment things of this nature meet with from the World, to promiſe my ſelf a better fate. I own what Authors ſay to be true, as to what you Object; and Arguments founded on thoſe Obſervations to be very ſpecious, but ſee nothing in them really to enervate what I drive at. I'll endeavour to make good this aſſertion by a familiar Inſtance. Remember you are or ought to be a Chriſtian, as I premis'd at firſt, and conſequently believe the exiſtence of Spirits. Many have pretended to ſee and converſe with Angels, Dæmons, or departed Souls; and no doubt ſome have. But 'tis as true, many more have only pretended, and been under ſtrong deluſion: Guilt, Fear, Fancy, has made them believe ſtrange things, notoriouſly falſe. Now ſuppoſing all this to be matter of fact, I demand how he that really converſes with ſuch things, and has the fulleſt proof to himſelf that he does ſo, which the nature of the thing admits of, can get rid of the charge of Impoſture? Meer pretenders will be as poſitive and punctual as he, and as ſolemn in their

aſſeverati-

aſſeverations, and for that reaſon the World will treat him as rigorouſly. If he be a Man of Parts and Learning, fam'd for Wiſdom, then he's ſuſpected as a cunning deſigning Fellow. If his Character run for Piety, that wont ſecure him: If they allow him to be honeſt, then they'll ſay he is timorous, weak, and credulous; but were he wiſe and couragious, and much more, by one means or another they'll be ſure to ſhift off the evidence. Muſt now this Man forego the evidence of his Senſes, and believe himſelf a Fool or Mad-Man, becauſe wiſe Men think him ſo? or his Viſions to be nothing but the Projection of Shadows animated by a roving Fancy, the meer effect of Moon-ſhine or Candle-light, aſſiſted by a diſordered Brain? Will Gibes and Drollery, Scoffs and Jeers, fine Sayings and ſubtile Arguments, perſuade him he ſlept or dream'd, or is a Lunatick? Will he not ſcorn the Impoſition, and know you to be in this matter, what you think and miſcall him? What anſwers this, does the Objection, which you may apply at your leiſure, and what you in ſhort ſay, lies open to all Cavil; I retort, by affirming what's ſaid here and before, concludes as ſtrongly againſt all objections of this nature.

What makes Men better ſatisfi'd with the teſtimony of their own Senſes, than with that of a Hundred as well quallifi'd Perſons, but Self-love and Opinion? And what makes ſome readily believe the Being, Cuſtoms, Manners and Diſpoſitions of

Countries they never ſaw, upon the Report of others; and yet reject all relations of inviſible Agents, tho' ne'er ſo well atteſted? What can be the Cauſe, but the degeneracy of their Nature and Principles, which makes them ſecretly wiſh, and deſire there were no ſuch things? Reaſon tells us, the teſtimony of many can't be ſo liable to impoſture, as that of one: And that the teſtimony of honeſt Men, is as valid in one Caſe as another, tho' Knaves abuſe every thing. In this matter the Men of Senſe oppoſe the dictate of their avowed Oracle, while they cry, great is *Diana*, and Sacrifice to her Shrine; tho' *Dagon*-like, ſhe tumble down before the Ark of God, yet they gather up the crippled members of the Idol, and reinſtal her with double veneration.

Some have conceited their Bodies were Glaſs, and that every one that came near them would break them: Others, that they cou'd not move, or were too big to paſs a Door, till frights made them find their heels. Many Inſtances might be given of theſe fanciful apprehenſions, and other Melancholy Caſes: But I'd hope enough has been ſaid to prove mine was more than the heavings of the Hypochondres: But cou'd that imputation be fairly faſten'd upon me, yet the Man that ſhould compare the extremities I was under, to theſe fanciful caſes, I ſhou'd ne'er think him worthy of an anſwer. He that ſhould tell me, the Pain of a Prick with a Pin, was as as bad as that of the Rack or Wheel,

I'd

I'd repute him of kin to a Proud Senſleſs Stoick, whoſe pretence to more Wit than his Neighbours, has devour'd his common Senſe; for to deny degrees of Pain is as ridiculous, as to ſay there's none. In the *Ephialtes* or Night-Mare, the Patient thinks his Breaſt oppreſs'd with heavy weights; in *Rheumatic* Pains, the Parts to be gnaw'd as it were with Dogs; in extremities of the *Head-ach*, his Head to cleave as it were in pieces; yet every one knows theſe are but the dictates of Fancy, as to the formality of the conceptions; but I hope the Pains and Oppreſſion are real, and any that ſhou'd upbraid one under their Power, as fanciful, wou'd meet with but courſe uſage from him. Grant then that but to be real, which I declare was more terrible than ever I felt any thing either from Mind or Body, and we'll quarrel no more about Modes and Formalities. You tell me my Senſes are ſubject to fallacy; but how can you who are eaten up of Senſe, and believe little but what your own Eyes or Ears convince you of, with what brow dare you queſtion the Senſes? What? did you mean your own? Is it the little dear thing call'd Self you mean all this time? Have you the monopoly of true Senſe? And is infallibility part of your Birth right, and fallacy the natural inheritance of all other dull Mortals?

How cou'd you remember theſe Paſſa- Object. VI.
ges ſo diſtinctly, while under ſuch an impetus of horrors and conſternation, during the time of tranſaction?

God

Anſw. God gave me a Preſence of Mind, and for ought I know, with a deſign to enable me to perform what I have here attempted. I had intervals for recollection; and I hope, I need not take pains to perſuade you, matters that came with that force, and ſo neerly concern'd me, employ'd my Thoughts conſtantly, and ſtuck cloſe to me. And the very worſt I wiſh you is, that you may ne'er have ſuch feeling reaſons, and coſtly occaſions of remembrance, nor know the Terror of ſuch Impreſſions. None know the effects of the anger of Heaven, but ſuch as feel them.

One Frown from God, will be found more dreadful than the diſpleaſure of the whole World: Wo be to him that has to deal with Omnipotency provok'd! *According to his Fear, ſo is his Wrath.* If he once take you in hand, you'll ſoon know who you have to do with; your dear-bought Experience, will be inſtead of all Arguments to convince you there's ſomething very diſtinguiſhing in that treatment from all that ever you felt. Believe it, the Flames will be more tolerable to your Body, than that anguiſh will be to your Mind, when the Poiſon of his Arrows drinks up your Spirit. Summon the Sons of Art about you: Get the Tongue of the Learned, and the Aſſiſtants of Nature: Try the force of Reaſon, Diſtinctions, and grave Suppoſitions. Obſerve if ſuch as would joke or argue you into ſuppoſals, that you are only under bodily Diſtemper, don't

Pſal. 90.

don't out of meaſure exaſperate you. I knew an attempt of this nature made by a jolly Crew, but the Party treated them with ſuch a Mein and Expreſſions, as ſtruck terror into the Center of their Souls, and forc'd them to quit the Room. If you think there's any truth in this, be not now then too opiniative of your Objections, leſt you befool your ſelf as much if it ſhou'd e're be your own Caſe.

Men of Parts and Learning will ſay you are an Enthuſiaſtick Viſionary; that your Cant appears in laying ſuch a ſtreſs upon the impreſſion of the two Sermons you heard in your Agonies. You was no proper judge of a Sermon then: You intimate the mean opinion you had of the Preacher, and his indifferent Performances, and yet tell us it extraordinarily affected you. Would not the meaneſt Diſcourſe have produced the ſame effect at ſuch a juncture? The fearful ſtart at their own Shadow, the ſhaking of a Leaf, the whiſtling of the Wind. How eaſily might you conſtrue the Voice of a Man, at ſuch a ſeaſon, as God's thunder from Heaven? and miſtake a ſerious Exhortation falling in with your fears, for Divine impreſſions? Object. VII.

Parts, *&c.* without Piety are like a Sword in a Mad-man's hand, to do the more miſchief. Serious Diſcourſe without more a-do paſſes for Cant with too many; the mentioning the Influences of the Spirit of God, they term Enthuſiaſm; and a ſtrict Life, they call refin'd Hypocriſie; tho' the Anſw.

Divine

Divine Oracles lay the greateſt weight on ſuch things, and recommend nothing more than * exact walking, as the Apoſtle phraſes it. Did the Oratory or Learning of St. *Peter*, Convert ſo many Thouſand by one Sermon? Or did the Power of his Preaching conſiſt in the demonſtration of the Spirit? *That our Faith ſhould not ſtand in the Wiſdom of Men, but in the Power of God.* Did the ſhaking of the Priſon, or St. *Paul*'s Eloquence, convert the Jailor? Or did the Spirit of Chriſt reveal him? What cou'd an Earth-quake effect, but what it does uſually, fright and terrifie, without the ſtill Voice within? Has not God put *this Treaſure in Earthen Veſſels, that the excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us?* Have we no Inſtances in our Days of the mighty Succeſs of weak Inſtruments, while great ones have effected far leſs? Why ſhou'd we ſo overrate the Opinion of thoſe, the Holy-Ghoſt villifies ſo much in the Three firſt Chapters of the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*? 'Tis a Plea we know as old as Scribes and Phariſees, and juſt of the ſame force now, it was then; *viz. Have any of the Rulers, or of the Phariſees, believed on him? But this People who know not the Law are curſed*; tho the Officers repreſented our Lord ſpeaking *as never Man ſpake.* v. 46. 'Tis eaſy for ſome of the worſt of Men, to traduce ſome of the beſt, as a Mob of Ignoramuſes, and they ne'er want a wild Party to ſecond them, who are more eaſily impreſs'd with Confidence than Truth. I heard

* Ἀκριβῶς *a word ſome have made the ſubject of their Raillery, tho' us'd by the H. Gh.*

1 Cor. 2. 4, 5.

2 Cor. 4. 7.

John 7. 48, 49.

heard excellent Sermons before theſe Impreſſions, and have ſince, under great Terrors, without any ſuch effect: And you muſt pardon me, if I ſay, I'm the beſt judge of my own perceptions and ſenſations. " No Man, ſays a Learned Gentle- *Dr. Grew of*
" man, can be a proper judge of an others *Univerſ. p.*
" Actions, that omits any one circum- 49.
" ſtance relating to them. An exact judg-
" ment, being ſo far like a Mathematic
" demonſtration. The making whereof,
" may poſſibly depend upon Twenty Pro-
" poſitions to be predemonſtrated; the o-
" mitting of any one of which will make
" the whole Operation to be fooliſh. If this be ſo as to outward Actions, what gueſs can be made of inward Senſations? If Men will not take a true repreſentation of what paſſes between God and the Soul upon truſt, they muſt confine their knowledge to their own Experience. As for that part of the Argument that concerns a timorous Temper, it was not my caſe from Nature or Diſeaſe, ſo deſerves no farther anſwer. " When God gives *Bp.* Sander-
" ſtrength to his Word in the Mouth of ſon, *p.* 170,
" but weak Inſtruments, it pierces into and 183.
" the Conſciences of obſtinate Sinners,
" and brings the Proudeſt of them upon
" their Knees in deſpight of their Hearts.
" *Felix* trembled at it, *Ahab* was humbled
" by it; the one an Atheiſt, the other a
" Hypocrite: Thou art worſe than either,
" if it work not at leaſt as much upon
" thee.

Object. VIII. But to what purpoſe do you broach theſe things to the World? there's enough of this nature upon record already, in much plainer Caſes; whereas yours ſeems to be more intricate and dubious. What's divulg'd ſatisfies good Men; above all the Word of God; and there's more virtue in believing and acting accordingly, than in hankering after ſenſible appearances. Men that have no Faith, are moſt craving after Arguments from Senſe, which curioſity and a ſenſual genius prompt them to, which your Caſe will by no means ſatisfie. The Deiſt and Sceptick complain they are ſurfeited with theſe things, and make them frequently the Subject of their Merriment; you do but provoke their grin, and get a liberal ſhare in their diſdainful pity.

Anſw. 'Tis, I hope, neither the Fear or Favour of Men that excite me to this attempt; I deſire pure ſenſe of Duty, Love and Loyalty to my Bleſſed Maſter, in queſt of his Glory, ſhou'd animate every tittle of this poor Performance. As for the Taunts of the Men you mention, if you knew how little I valued them, you would not lay the weight of a Feather upon the Argument: And for their haughty Pity, wou'd they be perſuaded to keep it a little by them, the Day is coming, they may find little enough for themſelves. I ſcorn and defie both their Pity and their Cenſure, and wou'd no more attempt to compound with them for Mercy, than with their black Maſter. Had your Advice been taken a few Ages paſt, you'd have had much leſs

to

to brag of; and all Wiſe Men wou'd have deteſted your Counſells. If I throw my Mite into the Treaſury of the Temple, with a Talent of Affection, ſhall Love be rejected, becauſe ability fails? While the Wiſdom of Providence calls for Obſervation and Improvement, ſhall we non-attend, or conceal what might profit others, and advance his Honor, from a plenitude of our own Conceits? Arguments from the Senſes, we know wont alone convert Men; but if God ſometimes condeſcends to our weakneſs, and affords them, ſhall we ungratefully reject them? or in a profound pang of affected modeſty ſuppreſs them? Tho' ſome have leſs need of theſe helps than others, does it follow the ſtrongeſt Faith has none? And are there not bruiſed Reeds to be taken care of, as well as goodly Cedars? That contrivance muſt needs be wondrous, that oppoſes the Wiſdom of Providence. When God animadverts upon any, he requires all to mind and improve the Diſcipline: to refuſe it, is at their Peril. And what if God by ſuch Inſtances as theſe at ſecond hand, reſolve to leave ſome Men inexcuſable, who are ſo full of ſenſible demands, and bold challenges, who call living by Faith, Fancy; and dependance on God, Preſumption?

But methinks you very incautiouſly expoſe your Character: Wou'd you have the World think you were Poſſeſs'd, when you ſpoke Blaſphemy in a raving Fit? What elſe can you drive at? And if ſo, they'll judge

Object. IX.

judge very hard of you, and think you a Perſon little to be credited in any thing, much leſs upon ſo important a Subject. Some think Dæmoniacks of Old, were but Diſeaſed Perſons; and ſome that think otherwiſe, yet deny any ſuch thing as Poſſeſſion now a Days; but were both allow'd, they muſt ſure be very wicked whom God thus abandons and leaves ſo much to the Power of Satan.

Anſw. If I ſay any thing to take off the edge of this Argument, I hope it can't fairly be conſtrued as a contrivance to wipe away my own Guilt, and Apologize for my ſelf after ſuch acknowledgements of my unworthineſs; no, 'tis my Duty rather to aggravate it: *For he that covereth his Sins ſhall not Proſper: but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have Mercy.* 'Tis not then my preſent buſineſs to diſpute what Dæmoniacks were of Old, or whether there be formal Poſſeſſions in theſe latter Ages: Nor think I it my own Caſe, ſuppoſing there were ſuch a thing now. But this I take to be out of diſpute; that God now ſometimes gives Satan commiſſion to actuate the Tongues of very pious Men, for reaſons beſt known to himſelf: Witneſs the deſperate expreſſions of ſome of them in their Deſpairing Agonies; utter'd with great reluctancy, at leaſt reflected on with much grief afterwards; many of which are upon record, and too often are ſtill experienced. And this I'm confident was my own Caſe for ſeveral Minutes. 'Tis *Camerarius*'s obſervation; That the Devil affects moſt to abuſe

Prov. 28. 13.

abuſe the Tongue of any Member, becauſe it's the great Inſtrument of God's glory. It's likely as Mr. *Pool* obſerves upon the Place; he ſpar'd *Job*'s Tongue when he ſmote him from Head to Foot with Boils, with this malicious intent; that he might more freely Blaſpheme God. His Malice is without End or Meaſure, and greateſt againſt the beſt: Pirates ſet not upon empty Bottoms, but the richeſt Cargoes. *In illos potiſſimum invadit Diabolus. qui Athletæ Dei & averſo à ſuo regno, quos totâ armaturâ ſuâ, & omni μεθοδεια τῆς πλάνης aggriditur, de reliquis non laborat, qui jam ipſi obnoxii.* *Luther* complains he ſet upon him with incredible contrivances, as if he had been the only Man he ſought to deſtroy. And we know not how far our Bleſſed Lord conſulted our comfort in this kind, while he ſuffered his holy Body to be handled by Satan, when he wafted him to the Pinnacle of the Temple; provided we maintain our hatred and oppoſition of him. *Dæmones piis preſertim inſtant, atq; imminent, quo ne nos terremur, voluit etiam Chriſtus corpus ſuum obnoxium eſſe Satanæ ad tempus.* Let all whoſe fate it may prove to fall more or leſs under Satan's Power involuntarily, encourage themſelves by theſe conſiderations. No doubt inſtances might be given, tho' very rare, of Poſſeſſions in our Days, tho' the genius of ſome Men diſpoſes them fiercely to oppoſe the very ſuppoſition: the Faction has nothing to ſupport its Cauſe from Scripture, but declarations in general of the broken Power of Satan;

Spanh. Dub. evang. p. 197. *Part* 3*d.*

Camero Præl. p. 56.

and who dare pretend to ſtint it peremptorily, where God has not told us He has? eſpecially in the Face of ſome aſtoniſhing Inſtances.

Object. X. After all you have ſaid, or can, the Men I mention'd above, won't believe a tittle; they'll laugh at your deteſting and conjuring the Devil ſo formally, while they repute all the effect of a mighty fit of the Spleen: So they will at your Objections and Anſwers, as Men of Straw of your own rearing, with which you fall gravely to combating. They'll ſay, you han't given one their true Emphaſis, nor really anſwered what you have been ſo partial in repreſenting: And therefore, in one word, they'll conclude you are a Romantick ſecond *Spira*, a Fanatick, or a mopiſh Melancholick, one, or all. I'm really concern'd for you, as one purſuing an honeſt deſign with very imprudent managery.

Anſw. The Language you beſpeak them in, is as natural as the Foaming of a troubled Sea, or the reeking of a Dunghil in a froſty Morning. Were not the Votaries of Luſt and Liberty, ſometime agitated by oppoſition, they would not ſo eaſily foam out their own Shame: The Fumes that ſmother in their Hearts, would not be ſo viſible, were they not condens'd thus, as it were by *Antiperiſtaſis*, if I may preſume to uſe a Term ſo obſolete: Little Wit, with much ill-nature, will at any time accompliſh Satyr and Invective. Did your glorious Maſter bear the Croſs, and deſpiſe the ſhame, and do you pretend to take

it

it up and follow him, and yet ſtand in awe of a few hard Words? You are too ſoft ſure to be a Chriſtian, who ſhou'd be a Martyr in Intention: Did you expect the Way to Heaven ſhou'd be ſtrew'd with Roſes, and to meet with no rubs in the narrow Way? To ſuffer with Chriſt, is the way to be glorifi'd with him: 'Tis an Honor given to ſome, not only to believe, but to ſuffer for him; and this is one way: And would you be exempted from the Lot of ſpecial Favourites, not to ſave your Skin, but only to ſtop a little ſtinking Breath? There's a Wo denounc'd againſt ſome that Laugh; and who bids fairer for the largeſt ſhare, than ſuch as make a jeſt of ſerious things? And there's another againſt ſuch as all Men ſpeak well of; who, the better to ſave themſelves, take wondrous care to diſoblige no body but their Maker; that tack about to every Wind, rather than they'll endure ſtreſs of Weather; *Loving the Praiſe of Men, more than the Praiſe of God.* Believe it your Honor and Safety, to be ſcorn'd and traduc'd by ſome Men. I write not for ſuch as I can't think will afford it a reading, but peep it may be to play the Momus, and turn racking Inquiſitors. No, 'tis for their ſakes that will be ſtarting Objections; and I'm griev'd to ſee ſuch a neceſſity of anſwering them with ſo little proſpect of Succeſs; which makes me grudge the Minutes I ſpend upon them, and the room they fill of more uſeful things, to plain and honeſt Hearts. So far as my Arguments are

John 12. 43.

convictive, you are reſponſible; farther than that, they are none to you, after juſt trial; and if they prove of no more Life and Strength than Men of Straw; the more eaſily will the Sons of Wiſdom ſcatter them with a puff of demonſtrative Breath. I offend not wilfully in this kind; but if there be a failure, let my Abilities be rather queſtion'd, than my Integrity: For as I had much rather be a Weak Man, than a Wicked one: So I had rather fall under that Character, tho' the World generally ſteer by the contrary Maxim. Mens Thoughts are no more alike than their Faces; and a ready Wit, and ſubtile Head may put a Man to a ſtand that has truth on his ſide. However I may have fail'd in the manner of Proſecuting the Arguments, I doubt not but the grounds they ſtand upon, are ſufficient to anſwer other Pleas that might be alledg'd. Were * I miſtaken as to what concerns the Reaſons of my abjuring the Evil Spirit, yet acting according to full conviction, how ſhould it diſpleaſe God? Why ſhou'd it then Man? Let the merry Crew laugh on; 'tis but *Riſus Sardonnicus*, Convulſions before Death. Should theſe Men you are ſo afraid of, chance to turn Textuaries, and write Marginal Notes on St. *Paul*'s Viſion, or his Rapture, *whether in the Body, or out of it, God knows*; what think you would be the Comment? When our Lord himſelf was laugh'd to ſcorn, and treated as the vileſt Impoſtor; his Apoſtles ridicul'd as Men full of New-Wine, or Mad; what private Chriſtian,

* *Tho' no Man's Error commends him unto God, yet his carriage under an Error may.* Dr. Conant. *Vol.* 1. *p.* 78.

Chriſtian, in the diſcharge of his Duty, can hope for better quarter, while the ſame Seed of the Serpent ſo abounds? But the Day, bleſſed be God, is coming, which will ſet all to rights; when ſly Hypocriſie ſhall be detected, and no room left for ſubterfuge and evaſion, for Craft and Policy; when all ſturdy confidence that braves it with bold challenges, and bids defiance to every thing, ſhall drop at once, and ſneak for ever. To this I appeal, where it ſhall perfectly be known, who were the Deceivers, and who the Deceived; where I'm perſuaded we ſhall meet in better Temper, and to fuller ſatisfaction: Till then farewel.

I might have added ſome more Paſſages of moment, but the World will not bear them, neither indeed can I expreſs them to full Advantage. Let us uſe our Reaſon, but not Idolize it; nor pretend boldly to determine what God can, or does in the World; or confine his Providence to ordinary Methods; or the powers of the inviſible World, and their ways of operation, by the Meaſures of our narrow Capacities. Reaſon's a Ray from Heaven, deſign'd to lead us thither; 'twas once in Perfection, and in our own keeping: 'Twas given us then, not to be knowing as God, but to keep us in an humble dependance upon him, our Perfection and Safety. Pride and Affectation was our firſt undoing: The ill-husbandry of our firſt Parents, has reduc'd our Reaſon to the State of a Candle ſiuk into the Socket, that caſts a faint

glimmering Light: But Light is Light ſtill, tho' in a dark Lanthorn. He that deſpiſes it, forgets it's a Divine and Noble Gift, and is worſe than he that puts out his own Eyes: But he that truſts to it unaſſiſted by the Word and Spirit of God, follows an *ignis fatuus*, that will lead him into Bogs and Precipices, but ne'er conduct him to Happineſs.

To conclude with ſomething Practical. In a time of Eaſe and Serenity, be adviſ'd to lay the Foundations of your Peace, and hopes of Heaven, upon ſure ground, the Scriptures warrant. To that end endeavour,

1. To make thorow Work in the great Buſineſs of Converſion; depend not upon Civility, good Nature, Moral honeſty, a Profeſſion, a round of formal Duties, upon any of theſe ſeparate or all conjunct: Many here fatally miſtake and ſplit on theſe Rocks. No Man it's true can be a Chriſtian without Morality, but meer Morality makes not a Chriſtian; no not by adding the bare Profeſſion of Chriſt, without a vital Union with him. Jeſus *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, tells us, that *unleſs we are Born again, we can't ſee the Kingdom of God*; which he expounds of being *Born of the Spirit*. The Spirit works Faith, which unites us to Chriſt our Head, and ſo we become his living Members, whereby our Souls are animated by his Spirit, as our Bodies are by our Souls; the manner we know not in either, but by ſenſible effects diſcover it in both.

Read Joh. 15.

John 3. 3.

Ver. 5.

both. Thus the Apoſtle prays they may *be ſtrengthned with might by his Spirit in the inward Man: That Chriſt might dwell in their Hearts by Faith*; and ſo be *rooted and grounded in Love*. And *Coloſ.* 1. 17. *Chriſt* is ſaid to be *in* us, *the Hope of Glory*. This ſeems ſtrange to a Carnal Mind, as well it may, ſince it can't diſcern Spiritual things: But a true Believer has as real and refreſhing a ſenſe of it ſometimes, by thoſe Beams of ſtrength and comfort, radiating his Soul from the Sun of Righteouſneſs, as the Eye and other parts of the Body, have from the natural Sun in the Firmament: And tho' all have not theſe Influences alike, yet all partake in ſome degree, ſo as to be enabled to run their Chriſtian Race: And here lies the Strength and Conſolation of the Faithful, in all their preſſing difficulties: Grace in the Habit may fail, if not cultivated by the Hand of Heaven; as Rays of Light cut off from the *Focus* of the Sun; but while fed by that inexhauſtible ſource of Light and Heat in the Son of God, *in whom all fulneſs dwells*, 'twill maintain its Vigor; the Stream will run, as long as the Fountain feeds it. Moral Precepts no doubt have their excellency. But this ſpark of Faith and Love in the Heart, is the very Soul of them, that tranſmutes Moral Virtues into Chriſtian Graces. This is the ſaving Touch from the great Phyſician, that effectually dries up the unclean Iſſue of Corruption; a touch like that the Needle has from the Load-ſtone; that whatever violence pervert its poſition, yet

Eph. 3. 16, 17.

remains in a trembling unſettled Poſture, till it recover its true ſtanding Point.

Take heed of a half Converſion; when Men begin to ſee it needful; the next device of Satan is, to get them to take up with the ſemblance of it, and then he has them faſter than before, while they preſume and grow ſecure: He knows how ready our falſe Hearts are to conſent to the Cheat; how backward they are to a painful narrow ſearch: Many for want of carefully traverſing the windings of their own Hearts, have ſtuck in the Birth and miſcarried. Read with Care Treatiſes of Converſion; above all, the holy Word of God, where, as in a Glaſs, thy Face and State may be ſeen; and thy Spots waſh'd away at the ſame time, as in a ſmooth, clear Fountain, even in the Blood of Jeſus: get thy blemiſhes rectifi'd by his Spirit; beg it importunately, promiſed to ſuch asking; humbly intreat his aſſiſtance in Reading, Praying, Meditating, *&c.* Perform theſe Exerciſes with Life; reſt not in Formality, but ſtrive to move thy Affections: The Heart naturally hangs off from Meditation, or trifles in it; but rightly follow'd, is of admirable uſe. In all Confeſſions of Sin, trace the Fruit to the Root, actual to original Sin: Whatever others prattle; omit no occaſion for quickning Humility, as the owning this, eminently affords: Say with the Royal Prophet, *I was conceived in Iniquity, and brought forth in Sin*; in the Front he puts it, while

Pſal. 51.

con-

confeſſing his great Iniquity, to take the more Shame to himſelf.

Miſtake not legal Terrors for Converſion: They are, it's true, often the Pangs of the New-Birth, but they ſometimes go off without a delivery, as do thoſe of the natural; and then all may prove but a Sorrow unto Death, as did that of *Cain* and *Judas*: If Chriſt be reveal'd to the Soul in this diſtreſs, the Soul lays faſt hold of him by ſaving Faith, and then is the new Creature Born, and with the natural Infant comes crying into the World; diſſolves in Penitential Tears, with kindly meltings, that all its horrors could not effect. This is the Repentance unto Life, ne'er to be repented of, which gives the firſt dawns to true Peace: Sometimes ſurprizing the Soul with an ability to cry out with St. *Thomas*, *My Lord, and my God*; oftner enabling it progreſſively to perfect Holineſs in God's fear, till it flower up into the full aſſurance of Hope. Few eſcape all degrees of theſe legal Terrors, that are truly Converted; no, ſcarce ſuch as are ſanctifi'd from the Womb, eſcape them wholly, but one time or other ſip of the bitter Cup, if they live many Years. Take heed of two miſtakes here, either of bantering them as meer fits of the Spleen, as ſome have. *Vid. Dr. Scot Vol.* 1. *Serm.* 1. Or of quarrelling with God's Providence for not feeling more of them: If the Cure be wrought, rather thank him for the gentleneſs of his Hand.

Mea-

Meaſure therefore the Truth of this Matter by ſpiritual Illumination; a practick ſenſe of Truth; by Humility and fear of offending God; hatred of Sin; ſhineſs of Temptation; love to good People, as ſuch, for Holineſs ſake, however differing in leſſer matters; making Conſcience of Thoughts; affecting * cloſe walking with God; Delight in more Spiritual Duties and Truths; admiring of Chriſt's Perſon, and Love; thirſting after greater Purity of Heart, and Sanctity of Life; a mortification of the Sin of Conſtitution, Habit, the darling Luſt, that moſt offended God, and wounded the Soul, &c. the ſureſt grounds to go upon: which as we clear up to our ſelves, ſo will our evidences for Heaven.

Take not up with a falſe Peace from ſtupidity; nor depend too much on any extatick Rapturous Motions, which the Devil, as an Angel of Light, or Nature, or both conjunct, may impoſe upon us; by mimicking what's real in the Saints: See that Peace and Holineſs go Hand in Hand; and that all tranſports of Joy, are ſeconded with higher acts of Self-denial, and Vigor in Obedience; their proper Iſſues if genuine: *The Joy of the Lord is our Strength*, if right, they uſually flow in after great Difficulties and Sufferings; or while under them; or preceed them, as encouraging Viaticums; but ſeldom are of long continuance. I have known ſome after ſhifting from Sect to Sect, to meaſure the truth of Principles by the

Peace

* *Bp.* Sanderſon *reduceth all to two ſpecial Marks of ſincerity, which he ſays are as good as a Thouſand; namely, Integrity and Conſtancy: For theſe two are never in the Hypocrite. Lay theſe two together, and they'll make a perfect good Rule for us to judge our own Hearts by. p.* 176, *and* 178.

Nehem. 8. 10.

Peace they found upon eſpouſing a Party; a fatal miſtake, I fear, to many; which runs them blindly into the Spirit of a Party, quite oppoſite to a Spirit of Charity, the very Soul of Chriſtianity. Don't be too greedy then of comfort, which ſome too haſtily ſnatching at, have pluck'd only Green-Fruit to ſet their Teeth on edge; whereas this ſhould be left to hang like ripe Fruit, which in its ſeaſon would drop into our Laps. To expect true Peace and Joy, without ſound Knowledge and Practice, is to build without a Foundation: All ſaving Knowledge encreaſes Faith, which is the very Spring of Obedience: If we would rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, we muſt know him in whom we have believed; if we have true Peace, it's a Peace in believing: And Chriſt Promiſes the Comforter to ſuch as keep his Commands: And if we do the Doctrine of Jeſus, we ſhall know it to be of God. O the Bleſſed circulation of Knowledge and Practice, ſo productive one of another! iWthout advancement in Sanctification, all pretences of this kind, are but Preſumption and meer Self-flattery. Dread therefore a Peace that makes thee Slothful and Careleſs, as Poiſon and Deluſion: But if holy and induſtrious, and yet feel little of it, or rather the contrary, remember as the Shadow follows the Body, tho' not always obſerved; ſo does Peace Purity, tho' it be not always felt; you are in the way of Peace, and firſt or laſt, Peace is your Portion.

2. Spare

2. Spare not any one Sin; leave no unmortified Luſt ſtanding in its full Strength: If it do not abſolutely deſtroy you, which it mightily threatens, yet it will bring down God's Judgments; and when the Storm comes, or Death, 'twill terrifie like the Appearance of the Devil: Down with it then to the ground; lay the Ax to the Root of the Tree, leaſt God take you in hand, to your infinite Terror.

3. Take heed of delays; ſtrike while the Iron's hot; work every Conviction, while warm, home upon the Soul: Preſume not to intrench on God's Prerogative, who is Lord of us, Time and Seaſons, and Maſter of his own Favours: Work to Day, and talk not of to Morrow, leaſt the Fate of the Fool in the Goſpel follow. The Wind blows when and where it liſteth; hoiſe Sale then to every Gale, which will waft you with ſpeed and eaſe towards the eternal Shoar of Bleſſedneſs: If you loiter, you may find your ſelves becalm'd; the kind wafting breezes over the Munſoons ſpent: ſo may be forc'd to tug hard to little purpoſe, and lye long beating at Sea, expos'd to Storms and contrary Winds. Remember delay every day ſtrengthens the indiſpoſition, and encreaſes the deluſion; one lazy ſtep diſpoſes to another; agility comes by Exerciſe; the ſleepy Diſeaſe is not cur'd but improv'd by yielding. Conſider this is Satan's main Battery, which has ſlain its Ten Thouſands, and carries moſt to Hell; avoid it accordingly. When Men are of-

fer'd

fer'd great Things, they accept the offer, and comply with the Terms immediately; ne'er think you are in earneſt for Heaven, while you delay.

4. Labour to be the ſame in your Walk, you are upon your Knees; get and keep, as much as is poſſible, Communion with God; preſs into the Secret of his Preſence: the Soul will be employ'd, if not thus, much worſe: This will entertain and delight it, and make it in proportion die to every thing elſe: The ſureſt Method to die to Sin, and drop delays: Men love not God, only becauſe they don't know him; and till then they'll hug their Luſts, and hang off from him.

5. Fear God truly, and nothing ſlaviſhly: Expect the Enemy and ſharp Conflicts; Arm with Faith and Patience to maintain your Poſt; no Fight, no Conqueſt; no Victory, no Crown: Sneaksbies are often kill'd skulking, while the Bold and Brave come off ſafely in Triumph. Never ſhrink or compound with Satan, but ever reſiſt and diſdain him, as a conquer'd Enemy: Remember the *fearful and unbelieving* are put together and rank'd in the black Catalogue. The darkneſs of the Night, hideous Caverns, Grottos, *&c.* naturally ſtrike timorous Spirits with horror, eſpecially if the apprehenſion of Evil Spirits be at that time powerful: But if Duty call, balk no place or opportunity of performing it, but manifeſt truſt in God, the more Danger the more Honor, only take heed of rambling out of his way. Rev. 21. 8.

Capel of Temptation. p. 58. way. "To fear and fly the Devil, when "Providence caſts us on ſuch circum- "ſtances, is to pay him ſome kind of "Homage; a kind of ſerving Satan, as one "obſerves, and adds, We muſt ſtand; bet- "ter quake, than ſerve Satan; better "tremble every Vein, than Sin; better "die in the place, than fly from it; be- "cauſe it's a flying from Satan; and he that "in this ſenſe flies him, ſeems to diſtruſt "God's Providence over him for that "particular. This is a yeilding to the "Devil; God is angry with it, and it's "often the way to greater danger; what "if by this ſhifting the Place, we find "eaſe for the preſent? Yet it's but his "skill, like a Lightening before Death; "it leads us ſecurely into the Hands of "the ſame, or ſome other Temptation.

6. Act in all kinds with vigor, but ſtill in humble dependance; lay failings at your own Door, but ever aſcribe Succeſſes to God: If you truſt or applaud Self, a fall will enſue; the glory of his Grace he will have, or of his Juſtice. If you believe, it is by the exceeding greatneſs

Epheſ. 1. 19, 20. of his Power; *even according to the working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the Dead:*

1 Pet. 1. 5. And *the Power of God* muſt keep you *to Salvation* if you perſevere. Live as holily, as if you was to be Juſtified by your own Works, and your beſt done, think and ſay, you are an unprofitable Servant; abhor your own Righteouſneſs as filthy Rags,

Philip. 3. 9. and *deſire to be found in Chriſt, not having your*

your own Righteouſneſs, but the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith in him. Savour the Doctrines that tend to depreſs Pride, and exalt his Glory: Such *as Honor him, he will Honor*; and by nothing do we it more, than by the exerciſe of a profound Humility.

All theſe Arguments are naturally deduceable from my own failures, which, I hope, may afford the greater Cogency to the ſerious Reader, which I intreat him humbly to apply to himſelf, and take warning.

" I Will love Thee, O Lord, my Strength.
" The Lord is my Rock, and my De-
" fence, my Saviour, my God, and my
" Might, in whom I will Truſt, my Buck-
" ler, the Horn alſo of my Salvation, and
" my Refuge. I will call upon the Lord,
" who is worthy to be Praiſed, ſo ſhall
" I be ſafe from my Enemies. The Sor-
" rows of Death compaſs'd me; the Pains
" of Hell came about me; the Snares of
" Death overtook me. The Lord hath
" chaſten'd and corrected me ſore, but
" he hath not given me over unto Death.
" Thou haſt thruſt ſore at me, that I
" might fall; but the Lord was my Help.
" The Lord is my Strength and my Song,
" and is become my Salvation. He ſhall
" take me out of many Waters, he ſhall
" deliver me from my ſtrongeſt Enemy,
" and from them which hate me; for they
" are too mighty for me. They pre-
" vented me in the Day of my Calami-

" ty,

" ty, but the Lord was my Upholder.
" I call'd upon the Lord in Trouble, and
" the Lord heard me at large; the Lord
" is on my ſide. The right Hand of the
" Lord bringeth mighty things to paſs.
" I ſhall not Die, but Live, and declare the
" Works of the Lord. I will pay my
" Vows before them that fear him. I
" will thank Thee, O Lord my God, with
" all my Heart, and will praiſe thy Name
" for evermore: For great is thy Mercy
" toward me, and Thou haſt deliver'd my
" Soul from the nethermoſt Hell. Yea,
" let them now that Fear the Lord con-
" feſs that his Mercy endureth for ever.
" Give ear now, O Lord, unto my Pray-
" er, and ponder the Voice of my hum-
" ble deſires. Teach me thy way, O
" Lord, and I will walk in thy Truth;
" unite my Heart to fear thy Name.
" Lord, make me humble, and keep me
" watchful and thankful, for Sweet Je-
" ſus's ſake. Thy Vows are upon me,
" Lord make me faithful, abounding in
" Obedience and Praiſe. Defend me from
" the Crafts and Aſſaults of the Devil,
" Thy Wrath, and everlaſting Damnati-
" on: Stand by me in all my Spiritual
" Conflicts, in the Hour and Agony of
" Death, when all forſake me. And in
" the terrible Day of Judgment, be
" my Bleſſed Hope and Confidence.
" Whom have I in Heaven but Thee?
" And on Earth that I can deſire beſides
" Thee? O guide me by thy Counſels,

" and

" and after receive me to Glory. Let
" the Words of my Mouth, and the
" Meditation of my Heart, be alway ac-
" ceptable in thy ſight, O Lord, my
" Strength and my Redeemer. Now to
" the Sacred Trinity in Unity, and
" Unity in Trinity, be Eternal Halle-
" lujahs World without end. *Amen.*

N PART

PART III.

Conſiſting of an Account of the Methods of Divine Grace, in a Recovery of the Author from violent Temptations.

I Should now draw a Curtain over the remains of my Life did not the ſame Argument ſtill prevail, that firſt engag'd me: *viz.* God's Glory, *&c.* To manifeſt the moſt admirable and amazing Goodneſs of the ever Bleſſed God, whoſe Mercy may well indeed be term'd his darling Attribute, while it relieved ſo ſurprizingly a vile, helpleſs Worm: And to comfort and encourage, if poſſible, poor tempted, deſponding Spirits.

God's Grace, even to the leaſt of Sinners, is truly glorious; but the greater they are, ſtill more aſtoniſhing are the rich diſplays thereof; therefore if after a blazoning of my own Rebellion, I deſcribe the moſt excellent loving kindneſs of my dear Lord and Maſter, tho' it need no foil to ſet it off, yet it may appear to the dim ſighted more Illuſtrious.

Many, I know, repute it a piece of Modeſty, to ſuppreſs Favours of this nature;

ture; and for ought I know, ſome circumſtances may make it ſo: But where Love to Souls animates the Deſign, without a ſquinting look of Pride and vain Glory, I think there needs no Apology. Pride, as one well expreſſes it, " is the Shirt " of the Soul, firſt put on, and laſt put " off. We have all Reaſon therefore to fear, while the Houſe ſtands, the Leproſie will ſtick to the Walls, ſo muſt be cautious; and I pray God grant me my full ſhare. Charron *of Wiſdom.*

I return to that part of the Narrative where I broke off.

I ſtill remain'd under Diſtreſs, and now and then ſome ſmarter Twinges gave me diſturbance: But at length God was pleas'd to give me a glimmering Hope. One Day as I was reading a Sermon of that holy Prelate Arch-Biſhop *Layton*, God Bleſſed ſome paſſages much to my reviving: I heard a Sermon a little after, which gave me more; I ſat under it with Terror; but in the cloſe, St. *Auſtin*'s Sickneſs was touch'd upon before his Converſion; in which he was repreſented, as one deſperate, in his own Thoughts dying, and going to Hell, yet his Heart was hard, even to ſtupidity: This Inſtance running ſo parallel with my own Caſe, in this particular, and another very emphatically, drew Tears of Joy from me: But ſtill nothing fix'd long to do me Service, tho' ſome prov'd a preſent ſtay. *Serm.* 16. *p.* 291. *The whole Paragraph, eſpecially the cloſe.*

Here would appear a particular Providence, were all circumſtances related:

It may ſuffice in the general, that God gave me comfort by ſome particularities, which before had a great hand in caſting me down very remarkably.

The firſt abſolute turn given to my Diſtreſs, I obſerv'd, was, as I was coming home from a Friend I accidentally met with, to whom I had diſclos'd my State: He endeavour'd to comfort me; telling me; He that had begun a good work in me, would finiſh it; adding ſome more particulars; and tho' plain things, yet they reliev'd me. As I walk'd home, I was contriving what return to make to God, upon ſuppoſal of his Mercy; among the reſt, this was one, that I have here endeavour'd to accompliſh by this performance. I reſolv'd then to expoſe my ſelf and give God Glory; but finding ſome Methods I then propos'd to fall ſhort, I purſu'd this as beſt anſwering my Deſign: In the midſt of theſe purpoſes, ſome Beams of hope darted in upon me, which, bleſſed be God, prov'd the firſt dawns to break of Day, after a long and dreadful Night that overwhelm'd me. I came home now with a viſible change in my Countenance, and from this very Day, the light encreas'd more and more, till it came to bright day. *When he giveth quietneſs, who then can make trouble? And when he hideth his Face, who then can behold him?* In a little time I was perſuaded to go to the Sacrament: Juſt before I receiv'd it, God bleſs'd a good old Book to my great encouragement; they were plain Truths, but came with

Job 34. 29.

with a mighty force upon me: I felt great aſſiſtance at the holy Ordinance, and ne'er felt my Terrors after.

Some time after, I was diſcourſing with an old Acquaintance, about the ſad State I had been in: Some ſerious Words paſſing, oocaſionally drew from me this glorious Confeſſion; which I hope flow'd immediately from the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit, and accordingly deſire here ſolemnly to Praiſe him for it, as an act of moſt profound condeſcention, to ſuch a ſinful, worthleſs Worm: " 'Twas this, I do be- " lieve as firmly in Jeſus Chriſt, as tho' I " ſaw him with my very Eyes ſtanding be- " fore me: The impreſſion was then as ſtrong within, as my Words were ſtrong and emphatical; they much affected my Friend, a very ingenious Perſon, who reply'd with great earneſtneſs; I would give the whole World I could ſay ſo. Obſerve how the way of Duty, is the way to Peace; and hearty Deſigns of doing good, are the ſureſt Methods of receiving it.

I had formerly read many Books, on purpoſe to eſtabliſh my Faith in this great Point, but alas! after all, 'twas too notional: It nearly concerns all therefore, who deſire to be fix'd in the belief of this main Article, upon which our All depends; to intermix their reading and ſtudy with ardent Prayers; that Chriſt may be reveal'd in them; which will give them another kind of perception of that matter, than all the meer Book Knowledge they were ever Maſters of.

God ſtrengthened my Faith wonderfully by thoſe very Methods Satan attempted to ſhake it. Thoſe vile injections, with their ſtrange concomitant circumſtances related above, were very Inſtrumental in this kind, and are, I bleſs God, ſtill to this Moment; God improving them to reinforce my Faith, to the confounding at once all my Doubts.

O the Kind, Wiſe, powerful Providence of the bleſſed God! How did it out-ſhoot the Devil with his own Bow! and turn his curſed Deſign, on his own Pate! Thus *out of the Eater came forth Meat, and out of the Strong came forth Sweetneſs:* Glory to Thee, O Lord moſt high: Eternal Praiſes are Thy due; O bring me, bring me at laſt to that Bleſſed Place, where I may be in a capacity inceſſantly to perform it.

After this happy turn, as I gain'd freedom of Mind, I made very ſerious Reflexions on the Mad and Sleepy part of the World, amidſt ſo much Light: I found I had been ſleeping on the top of a Maſt, in the midſt of a roaring, tempeſtuous Sea: The ſenſe of my danger made me pity ſuch as I ſaw deeply immers'd in the World, plodding on tamely to deſtruction. The ſtrange affecting Light I ſaw by, fill'd me with wonder at Mens ſtupidity, till I reflected on the Vail that had been on my own Heart. I had ſtrong and lively apprehenſions of the worth of my Soul; the vaſt importance of Eternity, and the precipitate Motions

tions of time. I ſaw what a maſſy Treaſure I had loſt; ſo keen was the Edge of my Thoughts on this Subject, that I ſnatch'd with perfect greedineſs, at the nimble gliding Minutes, as the Thirſty do after Drink: No Prodigal turn'd abſolute Miſer, outdid me: O! how did I wiſh and wiſh again, for the golden Sands run and gone? when I ſaw clearly what I had profuſely ſquander'd away? The vivid Senſe of this made me Read, Hear, and Pray, with the greateſt activity: I frequented Sermons, *&c.* with as great a keeneſs of deſire, as the hungry Soul has to his Food; and receiv'd all, with as peculiar a guſt, even greater than I had ever before entertain'd any Diverſions.

Dr. Conant's *Serm. I read with great delight and profit.*

Bleſſed God! I beſeech Thee dart ſome of theſe thy quickening Rays, into every drouſie Soul that may Read theſe Lines; make them pungent and awakening; O thou that haſt the reſidue of the Spirit. Let not precious Time ſit heavy on the Hands of any; the Loſs of which, when they know its true worth, will preſs harder than the weight of Mill-Stones: And for thy Mercy ſake in Jeſus, ever retain on my poor Soul, the bleſſed Impreſſion, in its full and uſeful Strength. *Amen.*

I related above, how God in his Providence caſt me on a Paſſage in an Author, that wounded my very Heart, and brought my Hopes to the loweſt Ebb: But now, thro' infinite Mercy, the Tide turn'd to my exceeding comfort, thro' the ſame Channel it oppreſs'd me. Thus recovering

Dr. Preſton.

covering ſome ſedateneſs of Mind, I took up ſome pieces of the aforeſaid Author: In reading him, I found ſurprizing Light and Comfort ſpringing up in almoſt every Page: This unexpected Succeſs, made me covet more, till I read his Works very near complete; by which I got more ſpiritual Illumination and Joy, than by any I ever met with, next the holy Scriptures.

Whoever ſeriouſly reflects on this, and the other Paſſages of my Reſtauration; will evidently ſee, with holy wonder, God ſtepping back, as it were, in the very ſame Path he turn'd his back upon me in ſore diſpleaſure. 'Tis very uſeful to obſerve this more narrowly, that we may be the better Inſtructed in the wiſe and powerful Methods of his Providence, and be more ſtrongly impreſs'd with the Senſe that he is the very Life and Soul of all Means, to deject or revive; the great All in All. The true practick belief of which we all naturally are very backward to; and the Beſt have but too great Reaſon to bewail their deficiencies of this kind.

I believe God uſually bleſſes the Labours of holy Souls, of mighty zeal for his Glory, even when their Heads are laid, with greater Succeſs than he does many popular Diſcourſes; for *ſuch as Honor Him, He will Honor*. Some Preach themſelves more than Jeſus Chriſt, and teach their own glory, more than the pure weighty Truths of the Goſpel: They meet with many very fond of the Commodity, who, thro' the predominancy of itching Ears,

Ears, and carnal Fancy, ſuffer themſelves to be tickled to Death with a Feather, nauſeating plain Truths of greateſt importance. Purity and Simplicity are Truth's beſt Ornaments, while view'd in the Light of God's Word and holy Spirit; humane Embelliſhments too often Eclipſe its native Beauty. *Adam* and *Eve* in Innocency needed no Cloathing, nor does pure naked Truth any Set-offs of Art to recommend her to an honeſt Heart, and an awaken'd Conſcience: Her Charms lye in her unaffected ſimplicity; and the more ſhe appears ſo, the more raviſhing are the attractives of her Beauty, to the Spiritual Eye. 'Tis fallen guilty Man that needs the covering of Skins to hide his ſhame, and a ſickly diſordered Fancy, that delights to wrap it ſelf in Fig-leaves: Nakedneſs was Man's, as it is, and ever will be, Truth's Perfection.

Holy Men have much of God's Spirit, which enriches their Labours; and as it breath'd in them, it breaths afterwards upon them; tho' dead, yet they ſpeak Words of Life. 'Twas ſome of the laſt dying Words of that excellent Perſon I juſt mention'd: " I ſee I ſhall change my " place, but not my Company: He liv'd long in Communion with God, and now was going more fully to enjoy it. He was a Perſon of great Parts and Learning, but that was the Soul of all, to animate it with Succeſs.

I ſaw

I ſaw things quite in a new Light, very different from what I did before: 'Twas a Light that brought heat; I began to receive the Light of the Truth in the Love of it: I felt the counter-part of Truths in my Heart; I had the practick Senſe of what I ſcarce had in Notion before, and that very confuſedly. The brighteſt Truths, without a Spiritual Senſation, are but like Beautiful Objects diſplay'd before the Blind, that make no impreſſion. This is the true Reaſon why Senſualiſts and Formaliſts repute Religion a dull Buſineſs; becauſe they ne'er took Pains to feel its Power, which lets them into a perception of the true Peace and Joy it affords: This makes them deſpiſe what they know not, and ridicule eſpecially, the Myſtick Spiritual part of it; which they reproach as errant Cant, and meer Jargon, at beſt Enthuſiaſm: An opprobrious Term, that blackens it, and ſounds very popular.

I ſcarce ever read the Bible, that holy bleſſed Book of God, that makes wiſe to Salvation; nor ſcarce any other good Book, but my Heart was warm'd, humbled, enlighten'd, quicken'd, or comforted. I could now ſee and obſerve God in his Providence; in Sermons, ſuiting his Word to my Wants; in my ordinary Converſation; in Dangers; Deliverances; in Afflictions; Mercies; in the works of Nature and Grace; in publick and private converſes. To all which and much more I found my ſelf ſtark blind before.

A Spirit of Prayer I found pour'd out upon me, even to cry, *Abba*, Father; my Petitions were more ſtrong, lively and ſpiritual, with humble confidence of acceptance. I felt a new freedom, aptitude and readineſs to call God Father, to which I was an utter ſtranger before, at leaſt as to the vital feeling ſenſe of the Expreſſion. I hung all the weight of my hopes of prevalency entirely on the Merits and Interceſſion of the All-propitiating Sacrifice, and All-powerful Advocate, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous; that Lamb of God, which takes away the Sin of the World.

I took a new and peculiar delight in good People; Pious Diſcourſes; Religious Exerciſes; in private Receſſes; to Read, Meditate and Pray: I found that in Solitude, I ne'er cou'd meet with amidſt vain Company and Diverſions; even Peace, and holy Joy. The affairs of the World became a Burthen; and all its great and pompous things loſt their Charms: Sermons and Prayers had my Affections, leaving little room for Formality and Diſtractions, my heart being united in God's Fear, and fix'd to give him Praiſe; that before was without conſiſtence, diffuſing it ſelf like Water, at the beck of every toyiſh Vanity. Fear and ſtrong apprehenſions of the importance of Eternity, made me think in my Diſtreſs, I cou'd ſpend all my time in Devotion, which I felt now the matter of my choice, and delight.

But after all, to my Sorrow I find, both ſweet and terrifying influences may loſe their

their force, and the Soul grow benum'd and Lethargick, and the Spirit drag and move heavily, that once was all Fire, as in due place will appear. A very Inſtructive conſideration to ſuch as are unacquainted with the ſlipperineſs and inconſtancy of their own hearts.

I felt my Soul carried out to holy Souls as ſuch; however differing from me in Judgment: I hope I lov'd him I had not ſeen, in his Image in his, I had ſeen: I bleſs God moſt heartily, I was ne'er ſenſible of the Movements of any carnal inducements, to prevail with me in this Point. I found a ſtrange readineſs to forgive Injuries and Aſperſions, and to digeſt Affronts. God exercis'd me immediately with Trials of this kind; gave me the Victory and the Comfort of it; for which I give him ſolemn Praiſe: 'Twas in an Inſtance that touch'd me to the quick, and one time of my Life had it happen'd, would have inflam'd me, I'm confident, to the laſt degree. Now Pride, Paſſion, Vainglory, which hang all on a ſtring, were like Fire over-born with much Water, that ſmother'd only in the Aſhes: And tho' occaſionally ſome Sparks would be rekindling, they were ever hated, and by God's aſſiſtance, more or leſs ſuppreſs'd.

I found the Sin of my Conſtitution mortifi'd, which had moſt wounded my Soul, griev'd God's holy Spirit, and provok'd him to Wrath. This, I hope, was not owing to alteration of Conſtitution, nor was it the reſult of ſlaviſh Fear, or

better Diſcipline, but the Grace of God, that changes the heart. Many miſtake fatally here, without a real ſaving change; beſt diſcover'd by the pulſe of the Soul, which beats high and ſtrong in love to God, and ſuitable Actions of Obedience; which flow naturally as Water out of a Fountain, when the Affections are ſpiritualiz'd: But too many owe all their hopes to a change of Vices, jumping from one extream to another, very plauſible and affecting, where there's *the Form of Godlineſs without the Power*; or to alteration of Temperament; or the meer forbearance of the groſs outward acts of Sin. But I Bleſs God, I found a ſhineſs of the occaſions of Sin; and began Reformation at the Center, the heart, the root of my miſcarriages; and made Conſcience of the *Motiones primò primæ*, the firſt twinklings of the Thoughts.

Let no Man deceive himſelf; * his Conſcience was ne'er thoroly awaken'd to feel the bitterneſs of Sin, who plays fearleſly on the hole of the Aſp: 'Tis impoſſible for ſuch a one to maintain his Integrity before God and Conſcience; nor is he likely long to keep it in the Eye of the World. For as all approaches to Sin and Temptation are forbid by God, and for that reaſon defile the Conſcience; ſo all compliances of this kind wilful render us obnoxious to a fall. Such as expreſs little care and ſelf-denial to pleaſe and honour God, can ne'er pretend regularly to that

* *He that uſeth an unnatural Dalliance with any Vice, does nothing elſe in reallity, than entertain an* Incubus *Dæmon; he proſtitutes a wanton Soul, and forceth it to commit Lewdneſs with the Devil himſelf.* Smith's *Diſc.* p. 463.

that purity of heart he requires, nor have comfortable Evidences of their ſincerity.

I found a Spark of Zeal for God, his honor, and the good of Souls: My affections, once ſpread like Dung on the Face of the Earth, I felt now Centering in their proper Object. The load in great meaſure being ſhook off, which made my Spirit drag and move heavily in God's Service; that averſeneſs, deadneſs and laſſitude I formerly felt, I found converted into a chearful readineſs and ſecret Ambition to be ſome way uſeful to his Glory; which, I beg he would continue, and cut out ſome way in his Providence for Action, tho' in the loweſt Sphere.

I now look'd thro' ſecond Cauſes, upon which I ſo much doted, and thereby provok'd God, the jealous God. I had itching Ears before, tickled with Novelty, a fine Stile, Geſture, Elocution, neat Harangues, florid Diſcourſes: Some of which, tho' Beautiful in their Seaſon, yet were not like the great and plain things of the Goſpel; which I ſaw I muſt eagerly be in queſt of, if I meant to be happy. I had deſpis'd the Miniſtry, but now highly honor'd it, as a glorious Inſtrument in God's hand; and therefore ſaw that the life of my profiting by it, was bound up in his Bleſſing, who can blaſt the beſt when Idoliz'd, and make the meaneſt do Wonders, when deſpis'd; as I lately had found. Let ſuch conſider this, who are eat up of a Party, to the loſs of their Charity, and have *Mens Perſons in admiration*;

on; who pretend they can profit by none but ſuch as have the *Shiboleth* of their Party.

The Myſteries of Faith; Union with Chriſt; Juſtification freely by Grace; the Aſſiſtances of the holy Spirit; Converſion, *&c.* when treated of, appear'd formerly Subjects ſo Myſterious, that I receiv'd them with great coldneſs: but *do this and live*, had ever been a pleaſant Song, tho' God knows I made poor work of it. I thought all too much in my own Power, paying a ſuperficial complement to God's Grace, as a Notion, rather than as a ſolid Foundation to reſt hope and dependance upon: And I feel it ſtill a hard task to retain a practick ſenſe of reliance on Divine Aſſiſtance in the way of Duty, as I believe the moſt find that ſeriouſly ſet about it. Such as pretend every thing ſo much in their Power, if they are not ſome of the beſt Men, will one Day certainly be found ſome of the worſt. 'Tis very incidental to all the Sons of *Adam*, to be full of Self-confidence; the more reaſon we have all to ſuſpect our ſelves. I ſay nothing in favour of ſloth and inactivity, but to beat down Pride and Self-ſufficiency, which we can't ſo eaſily quit, as we imagine. He that watches not aright, can neither Pray nor depend aright; and it's as true, he that depends not as he ſhould, will ne'er Pray nor Watch as he ſhould; they all depending one upon another, as does the Chain upon its ſeveral Links.

But now the Tables were happily turn'd; I ſaw my Error, and reflected ſharply on my ſtupidity, and nothing now, I bleſs God, more affects me. The World, I know, is too ready to call ſpiritual Divinity, Myſtick; and Myſtick, Enthuſiaſtick; and thus ſtigmatiz'd, 'tis eaſy to bring it into Contempt with the unexperienced.

I read now ſerious practical Books with great delight, even the moſt ſevere and ſearching; ſuch as I dreaded before, and threw by. God poured Oil into my Wounds, and bound them up by the very ſame Hands he prob'd and exaſperated them: Which manifeſtly declares the Power and Goodneſs of God; and indicates ſuch to have as falſe rotten Hearts as my Self, who dare not come to the Light, but avoid induſtriouſly all pungent awakening Truths; and only love ſuch as ſew Pillows under their Elbows to nap quietly their Days away. I was much ſatisfi'd and delighted in reading thoſe two ſpiritual Books ſpecified in the Margin, which gave me great inſight into the Spiritual Life; abundantly proving its neceſſity to true Peace and Salvation, withal affording me ſome comfortable Symptoms begun in me. I conſulted many Books, which treated of Marks of Integrity, and a State of Grace, where I met with much comfort; particularly in Bp. *Hopkins*, *Of the nature and neceſſity of Regeneration.* He tells us, after many uſeful Signs of a real Converſion, that it's the holy Spirit only, who can aſſiſt us to make a comfortable application

The Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous. Life of God in in the Soul of Man.

application of Marks to our ſelves; into whoſe Light he reſolves all our Joy and Peace in believing: By which alone we come to know our State to be good; without whoſe teſtimony we can't be free from fears of Hypocriſie, ſo full of mimickry, even of what's beſt, in the beſt of Men.

Thus did the Bleſſed Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his Wings, to my poor, dead, benighted Soul: That Light of Lights; the great and glorious Luminary of Heaven; who beautifies and beatifies all the bleſſed above, about the Throne of God, of which he is the very central Light. Thus did he gradually diſpel the Clouds of Ignorance, Senſuality, and Unbelief, and the horrors of that dreadful Night they procured. Thus the Day ſpring from on high viſited a blind Mole burrowing in the Earth, grovelling in the very Valley of the ſhadow of Death, chain'd to his Luſts like a Galley-Slave; a Vaſſal to Satan, the worſt of Tyrants. The bleſſed Jeſus ſhined thus into my dark Soul, till my hope and joy came to a Meridian Splendour; even to the full aſſurance of hope; till I was tranſported with the Light of God's Countenance, to that bleſſed degree, as to deſpiſe every thing that came in competition with it: And Death it ſelf, I believe, would not have terrifi'd me at that juncture.

This Heaven upon Earth, laſted more or leſs many Months; which I ever found to ebb or flow, as I was more watchful or careleſs. Days ſet a-part for pirivacy

and ſolitude, I ever found of great Advantage to regain any abatements of this bleſſed Frame: Particularly, I found peculiar careſſes at, or after the holy Sacrament; and I ſucceeded in that Duty uſually, as I was more diligent in Preparation for it; and never ſince have intermitted it, thro' God's gracious aſſiſtance. I'm perſuaded weekly Communions are moſt beneficial: I fear ſloth is too much at the bottom of that pretended Argument uſed by ſome, againſt frequency, *viz.* that they abate that Reverence requiſite at ſuch an Ordinance. I think there is very little ſtrength in it; and what is, lies as ſtrong againſt all other holy Exerciſes, which we find the oftner we perform, with the greater facility and reverence we come to them, and ſucceed in them. Where ſloth and carnallity prevail to a nauſeating the Ordinance; or averſion to ſtrictneſs creates an indifferency; ſuch neglects can't ſpring from good Principles, but declare an ill frame of heart. And ſuch when they do come at their ſtated Seaſons, which they take care ſhall be very ſeldom, I fear come too formally. Conſcience and Cuſtom may drive to ſome ſtingy compliances; Love only leads to free and generous acts. Where deſires truly hang this way, but opportunity fails, God will graciouſly accept of the Will for the Deed, who meaſures us moſt by the bent of our hearts. And when his Providence ſo diſpoſes of us, that we can't enjoy what we deſire, if our Wants prove the

We are none of us at all better than we mean: our gracious God takes us by what we intend and mean. Every Man's Mind is himſelf; and a Man is what he means and intends. Dr. Whitch. *Vol.* 1. *p.* 96, *and* 97.

the ſubject of our grief, we may hope God will ſupply our outward deficiencies with effuſions of his Grace, in proportion to the breathings of our Souls, and redouble his Bleſſing on the few Viſits we thus ſolemnly make him. It concerns ſuch as have long hung off from this Ordinance, or trifl'd in it, ſeriouſly to conſider theſe things.

Since this, God hath vouchſafed me Four very remarkable Deliverances. I was formerly precipitate, little regarding God's Providence, but in meer Notion. Thus I often headily ruſh'd upon dangers, ſometimes tempting it; at other times I as baſely relinquiſh'd my Duty, and diſtruſted it: But now, I bleſs God, I could ſee his hand, depend upon him, and ſing his Praiſe. In all theſe Deliverances, I was in God's way, but in the laſt; which prov'd moſt hazardous, and coſt me ſome uneaſie Thoughts: An improveable hint by all ſerious Perſons.

Moſt bleſſed God, what a dead Dog haſt thou rais'd from the Chambers of Death, and the very belly of Hell, and brought into the Mount with thy Self, and made thy lovely Face ſhine upon him with Peace and Comfort! Could I amaſs all the Might and Skill of all the Arch-Angels in Heaven to praiſe Thee, 'twould be little enough: O accept the deſire, and my wiſhes to do it everlaſtingly; till that one bright and eternal Day dawn: In the mean while let all my Powers bleſs Thee; and while,

others wonder at the Inſtances of thy Mercy, make me live thy Praiſe for *Jeſus'* ſak e. *Amen.*

And is God indeed thus Merciful, thus ready to forgive the greateſt Sinners; and able to relieve in the moſt deplorable Exigency, even after Sins againſt the brighteſt means? againſt principles of Education, Light and Conviction, Mercies moſt endearing, Warnings, Providences, Judgments, thro'a continued ſeries of many Years, at the expence of the greateſt Goodneſs and Patience ſlighted and abus'd? Who then has any reaſon, or dare, after ſuch a Precedent, Deſpair, if but willing to return to God and his Duty? Deſpair is the complement of Sin; the Sin of Sins; the very perfection of Unbelief; a Sin greater than all the other Sins of the Life put together; that faſtens the Guilt of all our Sins upon us, without which the greateſt cou'd not hurt us. Shall any then preſume to think or ſay, their Sins are greater than God's Mercies, or Chriſt's Merits? To act thus, after ſuch an Inſtance of boundleſs Compaſſion, is to deſpiſe our own Mercies, and ſpurn at the yearning Bowels of Love and Mercy it ſelf: 'Tis to gratifie the Devil, ruine our Selves, and provoke God in the higheſt degree.

1. Then, let the poor tempted weary Soul, receive Encouragement, be its Caſe what it will; as he will be ready to ſuppoſe it, as bad as poſſible; for it's as natural for a truly humbled awaken'd Sinner, to think his Condition ſingular, and him-

himſelf the worſt and vileſt Creature under the Cope of Heaven, as 'tis for a Man awake to have the the uſe of his Senſes; or one long kept in a dark Cavern, to be overcome by the glaring Light of the open Sun. To paſs ſuddenly from one extream to another, cauſes violent Impreſſions. The Scriptures compare a State of Sin, to that of Death, Sleep, and Darkneſs: What a perception then a Soul muſt have in paſſing from extreams of this kind, to the contrary, may be imagin'd, but more ſenſibly experienced. 'Tis Satan's Policy to keep Men in ignorance as long as poſſible; but when they will ſee, his next attempt is, that they may ſee nothing but Sin and Miſery, to conſummate Deſpair.

'Tis expedient in theſe Caſes, ſometimes to make liberal conceſſions, and allow the troubled Spirit to ſuppoſe his State, as his Fears ſuggeſt: Otherwiſe he continually harping on this ſtring, will admit of no Conſolation, but what's grounded on this ſuppoſition. Till theſe meaſures were taken with me, the beſt Advice made no more impreſſion upon me than Water does upon a Rock; but Counſels grafted on the concluſions I form'd of the ſingularity of my Caſe, I found gave a turn to the edge of my Thoughts.

Are you then a prophane Libertine, a preſumptuous Sinner againſt Light, Mercy, *&c.* a backſlider in Heart, a Hypocrite, a Formaliſt, a Phariſaick Self-juſticiary, a Perſecutor, an Idolater? Are you any of

theſe, or all theſe, and worſe, if worſe can be? Remember then the Succeſs of the poor humbled Publican; the returning Prodigal; the converted Phariſee; who, after the exertion of a proud bitter Zeal, breathing Blood and Slaughter againſt the Church of Chriſt, commenc'd, thro' the exceeding redundancy of the Grace of God, one of the moſt glorious Saints God ever had on Earth. Think of *David*, St. *Peter*, and *Manaſſeh*; who made the People do worſe than the Heathen: Read 2 *Chron.* 33 Chap. and then let your black diſordered Fancy outſtrip, by the power of Imagination, his reallities: Dip your Pencil as deep as may be in Melancholy apprehenſions; and let the accuſer of the Brethren guide your Hand, while you draw the Picture of your vile, miſerable State; yet reſt aſſur'd, *there's Mercy with God that he may be fear'd*; *and plenteous Redemption in Jeſus Chriſt*; and that for you, if but humble and believing.

Let no ſenſe of Unworthineſs drive you from Chriſt, but to him, who is only Phyſician to the Sick; Reſt to the Weary and heavy laden; and a Saviour, not to the Righteous, but loſt Sinners; who rejoices more at the Return of the loſt Sheep, than at the Ninety nine which ne'er went aſtray. Every one that does but Thirſt is invited; and the more thirſty, the more welcome: *Ho every one that Thirſts, let him come and Drink of the Waters of Life freely: Come buy Wine and Milk, without Price and Money.* This thirſt and deſire manifeſts

Iſai. 55. 1.

a ſecret attraction of Chriſt, which are no where found, but where his Myſterious influx is the ſpring of them. Only take heed of that curſed Doctrine of Devils; of ſinning becauſe Grace abounds, quite contrary to the whole ſtrain of the Goſpel: Becauſe Chriſt Juſtifies the Ungodly, and his Merits and God's Mercies are more glorified in the Pardon of the greateſt Sins, ſome cry up Faith and free Grace, to the deſtruction of Purity and Holineſs. The Treaſures of God's Mercies diſplay'd in this kind, are only intended as an Encouragement to ſuch as truly hate, and are willing to forſake their Sins. I have heard ſome ſay, if they did not Sin greatly, how cou'd Grace abound? The more Sin, the more is God's Mercy and Chriſt's Merits glorifi'd: What Fiendiſh Language is this? Hell it ſelf can't ſpit more rancorous Venom; a Doctrine that makes certain Ship-wreck of Faith and a good Conſcience: What groſs Folly and Impudence is it for any Man, walking in the Luſts of his own Heart, to fanſie and aver himſelf to be a partner of that Redemption, whereof ſo great a part is to deliver us from the Power of our Iniquities, to renew our Hearts, and reunite them to God, and poſſeſs them with his Love. I wiſh ſuch Wretches wou'd think ſeriouſly upon that terrible Text, *For there are certain Men crept in unawares, who were before of Old ordain'd to this Condemnation, Ungodly Men, turning the*

Arch-Biſhop Layton, *Serm.* 16. *p.* 290.

Jude 4.

1 Tim. 6. 3, 4. *Grace of God into Laſciviouſneſs. If any Man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to wholſome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the Doctrine which is according to godlineſs; he is Proud, knowing nothing.* Tit. 2. 14. *Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and puriſie unto himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works.* Take heed but of this Rock, and let nothing retard thy flight to the City of Refuge.

If you are fuller of Sin, of all ſorts and ſizes, than the Sea of Water, the Sun of Light, and Hell of Darkneſs; yet remember they are not infinite; that nothing but final Unbelief can cut you off from an infinity of Mercy and Merits; believe on Jeſus Chriſt; or at leaſt ſay, *Lord, I believe*, or deſire to believe, *help thou my Unbelief*: Look upon Deſpair as tamely lying down in the very bottom of Hell. If a perfect ſtranger to God, ſeek ardently his Friendſhip without delay: If a decliner from his ways, drop'd quite into ſecurity long perſiſted in; ſtir up your ſelf to Repentance; to the attainment of your firſt Faith and Love; that you may be able to do your firſt Works; Pray inceſſantly, earneſtly; ſtrive againſt the Stream; hope and depend, tho' with much weakneſs and reluctancy.

Be your caſe as bad as the Devil and an awaken'd wrangling Conſcience can make it; yet flee to Chriſt, tho' you can't ſo much as touch the Hem of his Garment: Study and plead the Promiſes, read Treatiſes

Dr. Spurſtow.

tiſes on that Subject. Has God heard any out of the Belly of the Grave and Hell, as it were, and ſhall you Deſpair of help and Mercy? Is God's hand ſhortned, that he cannot ſave? Or his Bowels ſhrunk, that he will not? Is the Sun the emptier of Light, for ſhining? or weary of beſtowing his Beams upon Dunghills? Dare you ſay, the Sun of Righteouſneſs has no Rays for you, when you ſee him laviſh them upon a benighted Soul, upon the very Verge of the bottomleſs Pit? Can your Caſe be reputed ſingular after reading mine? Know, 'tis as natural for all in your State to think ſo, as for the Sick to groan, and the Lame to halt; every one thinks his own Wounds moſt painful; his Burthen moſt intollerable; and every awaken'd Sinner, his Heart the vileſt. Conſcience enlighten'd, Sins appear like Motes in the Sun, which before lay hid, and with peculiar aggravations, which overwhelm the Soul with a ſenſe of Guilt and Miſery: No wonder then it thinks every one's Caſe better than its own: But know this is a moſt falſe and unreaſonable charge; for none can know another, as he does himſelf; and 'tis better to feel the ſmart of your Wounds, which may quicken you to ſeek a Cure, than to die of a Gangrene without Pain.

Sink your ſelf lower by your ſooty Thoughts, if you can, than I was; ſet Imagination a Tilt, that mighty Engine of Torment, tho' ply'd with all the Skill

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the black Art can afford it; and ſuppoſe, if you can, your Caſe more deſperate than mine, acting but a ſpark of Reaſon. How long a day of Grace did God vouchſafe me? O never enough adored Mercy and Patience! Don't then ſay yours is paſt: God's Thoughts are not like yours. But if you will have yours the worſt; know, be it what it will, 'tis not your guilt, but the love of Sin, that can ruin you; and look upon a ſtrong deſire of Faith, if not as the firſt dawns, yet as an earneſt of it. Do the Streams of natural deſires riſe thus high above their Fountain? Look upon them as touches from above: Go to the great Phyſician then, for he calls you, and ſay, *Lord, help my Unbelief:* A returning Soul moſt guilty, moſt glorifies him, as it demonſtrates the wonders of his Love and Power. All in Heaven once were Sinners, and ſome of them the chiefeſt; God offers you Mercy, don't obſtruct his Glory, and your own Happineſs, by needleſs doubts and ſcruples. Your own Heart and the Devil have deceiv'd you by carnal ſecurity; don't let him now top his Deſign, by laying on the Corner-Stone of Deſpair: Be ſure his Finger is in this finiſhing ſtroke of Wickedneſs, the more effectually to diſhonour God, and ruin your Soul. Tho' in Darkneſs, ſeeing no Light; yet ſtay your ſelf on the Lord, whoſe thoughts of Mercy are as much above yours, as the Heavens are the Earth: with whom all things are poſſible. Uſe all lawful means; keep

God's

God's way; plead the Promiſes; the longeſt Night will have a Morning: Lean not now, above all times, *to your own underſtanding*; truſt more the Judgments of others: Stifle nothing; Confeſſion to proper Perſons and Diſcourſe give eaſe: Reſolve, if you muſt, to periſh at the Foot of Chriſt, where none ever did, who lay there with humility; juſtifying him in all his procedures. Dread envious, repining, hard thoughts of God, as the ſparks of Hell, which gratifie the Devil as they diſhonor God, and torment your own Soul. Carefully avoid raſh, paſſionate Expreſſions, which give the Enemy great advantage, and will coſt you ſad after-Reflections: The Temptation runs ſtrong at this time, to think and ſpeak hard of God and your Self, ſtrive againſt it with all your might: Your yieldings here, will be Satan's great Earnings; redouble your guard; where the ſmarteſt attack is, there be ſure he expects to get no ſmall advantage, if he carry his Point.

See an Inſtance in Dr. Horneck's *beſt Exerciſes. p.* 256.

Say not as wretched I did, in the bitterneſs of my Soul; Chriſt dy'd not for me, He had no intentions to ſave me: To queſtion his Will, carries with it a tacit Reflexion on his Power: Wreſtle with him till he Bleſs you; he is beſt pleas'd with a holy Violence, and reiterated importunity. He'll account this preſſing into his Preſence, not as great Men do, troubleſome and unmannerly; but give you firſt or laſt the better welcome moſt aſſuredly: Say with the Leper, *Lord, if thou*

thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean: Wait with the Woman of *Canaan*, in great Humility, tho' his firſt anſwer be rough, and his Countenance ſtern; yet in due time, you ſhall find him the meek, gentle Lamb of God; ready to waſh away your Leproſie in his own Blood; ſaying, *I will be thou clean*; and, *great is thy Faith, be it as thou deſireſt*.

If the Devil and your guilty Fears attempt to ſtop the Breath of your Prayers, cry the louder with the Blind Man, *Thou Son of David have Mercy on me*: A ſhatter'd broken Prayer acknowledges him; none diſowns him. *The Prayer of the Wicked is Sin*; but that of a *broken Heart and contrite Spirit*, is of great Eſtimation and efficacy. Think not your Prayer formal; a Hypocritical taking God's Name in vain, ſo put on the ſcore of your Sins, a provocation inflaming your account; as the Enemy without fail will ſuggeſt. Expect not to feel affections flowing now your Soul is benum'd with grief, and your Heart contracted with Sorrow and Anguiſh; but know, a Sob, a Sigh, a Groan from a wounded humble Heart, has now as much Rhetorick to prevail with Heaven, as the moſt flowing affections at another time.

See Bp. Sanderſon *p.* 184. *of firſt* 14 *Sermons.*

Don't confine your ſelf to long and ſet Duties without ſome freedom of Spirit; leſt Satan diſcourage you by the tediouſneſs and dryneſs of them; heavineſs and dulneſs, is not ſhook off now, as at another

nother time, by Reſolution and Contention: Lift your Soul then to God in frequent aſpirations; 'tis ſtrength, not length of Duty, that God regards. Deſire to be on your Knees; and ſnatch at every nick for ſolemn Prayer; then if your Caſe admit not of it, he'll graciouſly accept the Will for the Deed, pity your Infirmities, and receive your Ejaculations: Let the frequency of theſe ſupply the deficiency of Set-Duties in extremity. By ſuch fallacies as are here ſpecified, did Satan muzzle me, and keep me from Prayer, often in my extremities; let none be wholly diſcourag'd, if by ſtreſs of weather they have been forced from this Sheet-Anchor; but ſtill let them value, and be as ſollicitous to keep it, as Mariners are theirs in a Storm: tho' God's Providence ſave many left to the rage of Winds and Waves; yet no Man muſt fling up the Means of his ſafety, while they continue in his Hands, but ply all with diligence.

Cry thus with holy importunity; and you ſhall receive your Sight in God's due time, ever beſt, tho' uneaſineſs make the preſent ſeem moſt ſeaſonable. If the unjuſt Judge was thus overcome, be ſure the Judge of the whole Earth will come at length to your reſcue, a Saviour to all that with Patience wait for him: Remember it's Satan, who once tempted, that now terrifies: 'Tis he that overcharges you, who formerly ſoftned your Guilt: He had the ſame deſign in chaſe he now has, only has ſhifted his Methods: He com-

Read Dr. Sibbs's Soul's conflict, Chap. 21. And you will meet with ſurprizing Truths.

compounded with you before, now would carry you by Storm: God's holy Spirit has enlighten'd you, or he had wheedled you on in darkneſs; fear not the Light, tho' troubleſome to your weak diſtemper'd Eyes.

Chriſt all this while ſecretly draws and ſupports you: have Patience, and weather the Storm a little; Heaven is worth a ſharp brunt: Keep your hold, and all is your own; be of good Chear, the great Phyſician calls you, tho' by harſh Methods, yet with moſt kind Intenſions: God deſpiſes not the Day of ſmall things, don't you: Make not too much haſt, he that believes, does not: He waited long for your return to him; don't then grow impatient, if he make you tarry: He has gracions Deſigns even in his delays; Peace, Heaven, and Bleſſedneſs, ne'er are thought to come too late when they are enjoy'd: Stay and hope, *and he that ſhall come, will come*; it may be quickly; if not, yet at length the more comfortably. Even ſo, Lord Jeſus, come to every tempted, trembling Soul. *Amen.*

My juſt concern for Perſons in this doleful State, has made me run this Topick out of compaſs: The unexperienc'd may think it tedious, but poor toſs'd weary Spirits, if God's Bleſſing give it any effect, will think it as much too ſhort: Let this conſideration apologize for this excurſion, to all ſtrangers to trouble of Mind. I cloſe all under this Head, with a Paſſage occurring in my extremity: 'twas this: One of good know-

knowledge in Religion, tho' little under its Power, obſerving the preſſure of my Diſtreſs, let fall this Expreſſion; "Do "you think God will give you two Hells? "He does not Puniſh at this rate here "and hereafter. It pleaſed God to bleſs it, as ſome ſtay to my Spirit; and it really wants not its weight: I pray God others may conſider it, and what elſe has been ſaid, to extract ſome gleams of hope and comfort out of all: But let none miſapply it.

2. Let all hence learn to give and receive a good Education, as a vaſt Bleſſing, and be ſure to follow it with many hearty Prayers: All, it's true, may ſeem to be worn out and loſt, yet they prove a weight, and pull back more or leſs; and when God gives a new ſpring to all, as he often does, they'll be found of inconceivable advantage. Good Principles may be almoſt overgrown with Weeds of Vice, to the exhauſting almoſt the very Life of them, and yet the Hand of Heaven can revive them: Prayers of pious Parents may hang long upon the File unanſwer'd, after their Heads are roll'd into the Duſt; and yet their Children may in due time find the Bleſſing of ſuch an Inheritance: God, for wiſe and holy Reaſons, may ſuſpend the anſwer in their Life-time; to wean them from the World, and exerciſe their Faith and Dependance on him; and yet one Day may find, they were far from being put up in vain. Corn comes not up as ſoon as ſown, but after Faith and Patience, a

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fruitful Harveſt appears. I ſolemnly here bleſs God for the returns of this ſure, and beſt part of my Inheritance, and beg the remains behind, in his due time. Let Parents that neither Pray for their Children, nor Inſtruct them as they ſhould, conſider how barbarous and inexcuſable they'll one Day be found. Some I have known to do little, but pretend to expect the Grace of God; a meer idle, wicked pretence: For ſuch as uſe not means, give the Lie to their own Prayers; and affront God, if ſuch may be ſuppoſed to pray in a blind piece of Charity. And let wicked Children, that brag they have worn off the Principles of their Education; if they have but a ſpark of Reaſon left, conſider with Terror, what may be the dreadful Iſſue: For God does not always interpoſe, eſpecially when they wilfully break thro' all Tyes, and ſtrongeſt Obligations.

3. Let none preſume to play the Wantons in Sin, from ſome precedents of God's free and ſurprizing Grace: Whatever he does ſometimes, to declare the Treaſures of his boundleſs Mercy, yet he ordinarily leaves Men to Die as they Live. But ſuch as turn his Grace into Wantonneſs, have leaſt reaſon to expect ſuch a favour; and I believe ſeldom obtain it. No Man governs himſelf by theſe Principles in leſſer Matters. Who is ſo Mad to commit a capital Crime, upon preſumption of eſcaping the Hands of Juſtice, meerly becauſe ſome have been pardon'd at the Gallows? Such as help'd to ſeduce me, I fear,

fear, are the ſame, if not worſe; and too violent Symptoms threaten their continuance therein: One of them own'd to me, he had loſt the goverment of himſelf, and was perfectly at the Lure of his Luſt, tho' arriv'd to a ſtate of Impotency: I pray God pity and relieve ſuch miſerable Souls.

An Ancient Author tells us, of an *Arrian* put to Death at *Norwich*, who, a little before his Execution, ask'd if he might be ſav'd by Chriſt: And being told he might, if he repented: He broke out monſtrouſly into this helliſh Speech: "Is "your Chriſt ſo eaſily to be entreated "indeed, as you ſay? Then I de-"ſie him, and care not for him. How much ſhort of the curſed Language of this vile Heretick, do the actions of ſome Men come? who deſpiſe and undervalue Chriſt for his Patience and Forbearance; who Sin more boldly and obſtinately, the more his Grace abounds to them: O the Hell of Wickedneſs, that is in Mens Hearts! Greenham. *p.* 110.

I find no ſtate is exempted from Temptation: No not that of Conſolation; nor is it a bounce of big Words, or a ſudden ſpurt of warm Reſolutions, that ſecures us; nor will whining or complaining relieve us; but watching, praying, contending, with a conſtant dependance on God: I ſpeak now of ordinary Temptations. He gives us a compleat ſuit of Armor of his own Contrivance, even *the whole Armor of God*; but none for the Back, if we play the Cowards: If we oppoſe *the Shield of Faith*,

it will *quench his fiery Darts*, as ſure as the Word of God is true, that recommends it.

I now experienced the truth of what experimental Divines teach, *viz.* that after ſharp Conflicts, God uſually pours in the Wine of Conſolation, as a *Viaticum*, to go on, and in progreſs, to face new difficulties with freſh courage: That when a Soul has had moſt intimate Communion with God, by getting into the ſecret of his Preſence; then Satan lies moſt at the catch, to enſnare it. When hotteſt, we uſually catch moſt Cold, eſpecially if we ſtand in the open Air, without movement. Too often, after warm enjoyments, the Soul is off her guard, and fearleſs, the Enemy induſtriouſly watches for this halting; chils and ſtrikes a damp, that ſtiffens and unfits her for action. That after a long Calm, and great Serenity, a Storm is to be expected; after Suavities, ſome fierce encounters.

Accordingly, after much ſettled Peace and Comfort, a moſt bold Temptation accoſted me, which urg'd and preſs'd me with remarkable Violence, Impudence and Importunity: At the ſame time God impreſs'd a mighty awe of his Preſence upon my Spirit, which produc'd an utter abhorrence and rejection. I doubt not but God permitted the Devil thus to ſingle me out for Combat, and ſuccour'd me; that I might have the comfort of the Trial; he the glory of the Succeſs; and Satan the Shame of a Baffle. O the pity and

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merciful contrivance of my dear God! who tim'd it ſo to my Advantage; which, at another ſeaſon of my Life, might have undone me, had it been thus ſtrangely circumſtantiated and reiterated. Bleſſed be God for a Preſence of Mind, and holy Reſolution: Thro' Thee alone, Lord, have I conquer'd; to Thee be all the Glory. *Amen.*

After the recovery of my Peace, I was not, that I remember, in the leaſt aſſaulted in this kind, for a long while, till this ſudden Onſet: Which conſideration, as it ſuggeſts a very fit occaſion to own, and praiſe the kind care of my great Lord and Maſter, in not ſuffering me to be attack'd till I was well ſettled; ſo likewiſe to make ſome uſeful Obſervations on the particularity of this Temptation, *viz.*

1. That Satan ever aſſaults the weakeſt ſide, moſt neglected; and will not attempt us, even in that part where he has often, and with greateſt facility ſucceeded, when he finds us very vigilant upon a ſtrict guard: And if ſo, as moſt aſſuredly it is, it teaches us conſtant watchfulneſs, whereby we may avoid the trouble and terror of his Temptations, and the dangerous ſucceſs of them: He dreads the cautious as he does a foil, very grievous to a proud, malicious Spirit: The very miſſing, or abatement of his baſe, troubleſome ſuggeſtions, will more than compenſate the expence of our diligence, beſide the avoidance of ſo great a hazzard, as the Violence of ſome of his onſets expoſe us to; a comfortable con-

ſideration to all ſuch as value their Peace and Salvation: And I pray God, it be ſuitably improv'd.

That as all Impreſſions of Fear, Love, and Caution, are naturally apt to abate in time, without great Vigilance; ſo Satan diligently expects the critical Minute, and will be ſure to improve it to the utmoſt; either more ſlily, but not at all the leſs effectually; or by open Battery and Aſſault, if the Breach be practicable; eſpecially after great Humiliations, and Experiences of God's goodneſs; to plunge the Soul more conſummately in Deſpair, and thereby ſhake the Faith of others: For where he thus prevails, the Soul often ſinks into deſpondency, and ſo the Party makes away with himſelf; or elſe, having no hopes of Heaven, turns Libertine, ſtriving to make the beſt of this World: Either of which has fearful conſequences, affecting themſelves and others.

What ſafety then can we dream of in this World? No circumſtances can ſecure us; for when the Enemy ſeems to fly, and leave us for a ſeaſon, 'tis but to lay an ambuſcade, frequently moſt ſucceſsful.

Dr. Gilpin *of Tempt. Part* 1. *p.* 124.

" The Devil, ſays one, when he fights after the *Parthian* manner, is moſt to be " fear'd; when he turns his Back, he " ſhoots moſt envenom'd Arrows, and " whom he ſo wounds, he commonly " wounds them to Death. O! how ſhould we then continually pray for freſh ſupplies from Heaven; ſtriving often to reimpreſs on our Souls, by ſerious Meditation, what time

time and inadvertency may have worn off: This is one kind of *Watching unto Prayer*; a good Preparative for it; and a circulation of Prayer and Meditation, will be found a circle of ſafety, infinitely beyond the power of Magick and Enchantment: The Devil laughs at ſuch ſolemn Follies; and if he ſubmit at any time to thoſe Rules of Art, 'tis only to get the ſurer hold of the Artiſts: But holy Exerciſes really make him tremble.

3. That if ever we ſucceſsfully oppoſe the craft and power of Satan, it muſt be in a better ſtrength than that of our own: For ſtrong Temptation, with ſudden ſurprize, thruſting violently upon us, may ſo ſtun Reaſon, and awaken Senſe, that the Soul may warp, before ſhe can recollect her ſelf, if God don't ſome way interpoſe; and when once we begin to yield, the Temptation redoubles its force, and our ſtrength declines every Minute; 'tis hard then to recollect, and rally our broken Forces; and what then can be the Iſſue; but that the Serpent having thus wound in his Head, ſoon wreaths in his whole Body, to ſting us at his Pleaſure? Let us go out then againſt theſe formidable Foes in the Name of the Lord, as holy *David* did againſt *Goliah*: Their inviſibility is their advantage; but if the Power of Chriſt reſt upon us, *in the Name of the Lord we ſhall deſtroy them.* "We are ſurrounded with "the ſpiritualities of Wickedneſs: May "we not look on our ſelves as Graſhop-"pers, compared to theſe *Anakims*? and Dr. Barrow p. 459.

" quite deſpair by our own ſtrength to
" vanquiſh and reſiſt them? In our ſpi-
" ritual conflict with ſuch dangerous and
" dreadful Adverſaries, we need a large
" ſupply of the Spirit, a collation of auxil-
" liary Forces, an habitual ſupport deriv'd
" from that invincible and infallible Spirit,
" which only is ſtronger and wiſer than
" they.

4. That it's good to be well employ'd in God's way, when the roaring Lion is ranging abroad in his Walks: as we ſhall more rarely meet him, ſo when we do, we ſhall be ſure the better to grapple with him; for now we meet him with our Weapon in our hand, and God ſtanding by to be our Second, how then can we fail of Victory? But if Idle, or in By-Paths, we then tempt him to tempt us; we put a Weapon into his hand, and diſarm our ſelves; we drive away our mighty Friend and Succourer, and then we are ſure to loſe the Day.

I muſt inculcate it once more, leſt any miſtake me, ſuppoſing I attribute all to the Power of the Devil: No, I think to lay all the blame of our Faults to his charge, is abſolutely falſe, and looks like a hypocritical Apology for our own Lazineſs: 'Tis too evident, had we not Traitors within, few or none of his attempts would ſucceed. 'Tis true, the moſt active Chriſtians will be ſet upon by him, but their Victory over him, and his over the careleſs, demonſtrate how great a ſhare our own Hearts have in our falls. There is an im-

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pregnable Fort in our own Souls, that he can't maſter without our own unfaithfulneſs; he can ſift, try, wheedle, and ſollicit; but he can't force the Will, till our own conſent open the Door. He is called *the Accuſer of the Brethren*; to ſhew how ready and induſtrious he is to prefer an Inditement, and ſollicit a Commiſſion againſt good Men, when they trip, or grow ſecure: He has liberty to fall on the wandring and careleſs: And therefore the beſt have no more true ſafety, than they have of vigilancy. What God can, or may do, in reſtraining him in ſome Caſes, for kind and wiſe Reaſons beſt known to himſelf, when he has a fit and juſt occaſion againſt us, is not for us to determine; nor a Rule therefore to act by, or warrant our ſafety upon: His Word is our ſure guide, and the poſt of Duty, is our only place of ſafety. What God may permit, by way of Trial in this kind, and with deſign to our greater good, to which he converts it by an over-ruling Wiſdom and Power, we muſt not be too bold to determine, tho' we know he often has, and ſtill does ſo; much leſs venture upon any Temptation upon that preſumption; for its natural and direct tendency is to our ruin: Tho' God often make winnowing, purifying, and ſhaking, a means to eſtabliſh us; yet 'tis pure Poiſon in its nature, and ſolely owing to his Skill, that it becomes an Antidote.

A ſenſe of our readineſs to offend a holy God, and thereby giving our Enemy an advantage, ſhou'd teach us Humility, Vigilancy, and Dependance. Should God ſtrictly mark what's amiſs, what gaps would theſe throw open to the grand Deſtroyer? A Meditation that teaches us great caution, as well as hearty Praiſes to the moſt High.

The ſhort of all is this: As guilt and infatiable Luſts, will make the ſevereſt part of Hell hereafter, to which Devils will prove acceſſional Tormentors: So our corrupt Nature, Inclinations, and vicious Habits here, are the prime Sources of our Miſcarriages, tho' improv'd and excited by Satan's Skill and Malice. Take it in the Words of an excellent Perſon. "When "we ſay, the Devil is continually buſy "with us, I mean not only ſome Apo- "ſtate Spirit, as one particular Being; "but that Spirit of Apoſtacy lodg'd in "all Mens Natures. Where we ſee Pride, "Self-love, *&c.* we may ſay, here and "there is that Evil Spirit. All Sin in "Man's Spirit, has the Central force and "Energy of Hell in it, and is perpetual- "ly preſſing down towards it, as towards "its own place. Sins are thoſe fiery "Snakes, which will eternally laſh and "torment damn'd Spirits. Every Man's "Hell ariſes from the bottom of his "own Soul: Thoſe ſtreams of Fire and "Brimſtone ordain'd for the torment of "the Damn'd Spirits, are rather the exſu- "dations of their own filthy, corrupt na- "ture,

Smith's *Diſcourſes, p.* 463.

" ture, than any external thing. Hell is " not ſo much induc'd, as educ'd out of " Mens ſinful Paſſions and filthy Luſts: " other things are but appendixes.

Would People peruſe ſuch noble and divine thoughts as this Author abounds in, 'twould mightily tend to drive them out of thoſe refuges of Lies, they fooliſhly hide their Heads in, and fill their Minds with a true Idea of the Chriſtian Religion: 'twould convince them there's no getting to Heaven by Tricks and Formalities, but in a way of Purity and Holineſs, as being more a State, than a Place: They would ſee the Folly of truſting to a Phariſaical Righteouſneſs, or of reſting in any pitch of Attainments; but ſee the neceſſity of *perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God*; of *preſſing towards the Mark, forgetting what's behind*: of endeavouring to be *Perfect as their heavenly Father is Perfect.*

Bleſſed Jeſu, pity the ignorant and out of the way, and ſo ſupport thine in all their conflicts, that thro' thy mighty aſſiſtance they may finally come off more than Conquerors. *Amen.*

Diaries are grown much out of Faſhion, but their natural uſefulneſs, and the Example of ſome holy Souls, perſuaded me now to attempt ſomething of that nature. For want of this, I run over Head and Ears in Accounts with Heaven, and had nothing to flie to in my Diſtreſs, but was in perfect confuſion. Had I ſet about this ſooner, I had not been ſo great a ſtranger to Self-Examination, a faithful Monitor,

the beſt preventive Exerciſe to keep the Soul from running deep into the Debt of Divine Juſtice; nor conſequently had I prov'd ſuch a Bankrupt as I found my ſelf, even to amazement. To take ſome account of what paſſes between God and our Souls; of our Temptations, Failures, *&c.* in ſome ſuch way as this, has a natural tendency to lead us into this Duty: It has likewiſe this farther uſe: The beſt may be put to a plunge in an hour of Temptation or Deſertion: Now, in ſuch Caſes, when the Soul is under ſuffuſion and forgetfulneſs, ſuch a help as this in ſtore to recur to, may afford ſome Evidences of our ſincerity, which may have ſlip'd our Memories, and ſo prove a ſtay to our Spirits. And I doubt not, where it is perform'd with faithfulneſs, God follows it with a peculiar Bleſſing, as an encouragement to Induſtry, as many have happily found.

I fell at length into a gradual declining from the Spiritual Suavities I long enjoy'd, thoſe Bleſſed Viands of Heaven; thoſe ſmall droppings of the Cup of the Wine of the Kingdom; which ſeem'd all at laſt to center in a more fix'd calm ſerenity of Spirit. The firſt abatement alarm'd me, and I immediately fear'd a real declenſion, whih I knew often ended in a dangerous Apoſtacy: Forthwith I turn'd to Books treating of this Subject, and conſulting particularly Mr. *Gurnal*, my hopes got above my fears, and fluſh'd me into Tears of Joy.

I ſhall

I ſhall not diſpute whether the dropping my Watch occaſion'd this Ebb; or the fall of my Comforts, weaken'd the Spring of my Activity, (tho' it's always ſafeſt to ſuppoſe our own tardineſs, as it feeds the glorious Grace of Humility) becauſe God arbitrarily diſpenſes ſometimes his Favours, or at leaſt diſtinguiſhes between free gifts of Bounty, on ſpecial occaſions, and common Wages. The Fruit of Righteouſneſs is Peace, but he often indulges new Converts, and fills ſome before, or after their hard Conflicts, with peculiar Careſſes; ſo kind and tender a Maſter is he. Rapturous Conſolations make the Soul extatick for the time, and bold in Enterpriſes to expreſs her Love, ſetting her above the Charms and Frowns of the World; but then they uſually are ſhort; and if not frequently renew'd, a Caſe ſomewhat uncommon, the Soul is apt to flag in the interval. But now, true Peace and Serenity of Mind, tho' not ſo rapturous, is more durable, and leſs obnoxious to fallacy: The deepeſt Streams run ſtill and ſmooth, while ſhallow Torrents are more rough and noiſie: Many have felt, as they have thought, an inundation of Comforts, like a Land-Flood, that have been as ſpeedy in their fall, as riſe.

The Conſolations of God, certainly are not ſmall, but mighty Bleſſings; but we can't be ſure they are his, unleſs Obedience, Mortification, and great delight in Vital Communion with him, go Hand

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in Hand with them. There is ſuch a thing as natural Vivacity of Spirit, Enthuſiaſm, and deluſions of Satan, transform'd into an Angel of Light, ſeparate, or conjunct, the more powerfully to deceive. It nearly concerns us then, to ſearch, ſift and try what grounds we are upon; what genuine proofs we have of our ſincerity; and what tendency our Conſolations or our Peace have, to the Work of Faith and Labour of Love, infallible ſigns; or elſe all may be but the reſult of Preſumption and meer fallacy.

God forbid I ſhould diſquiet any cautious Souls, by promoting any needleſs jealouſies of themſelves or attainments, a thing they are too prone to without aſſiſtance; or lull my ſelf or others aſleep by a fatal Doſe of *Opium*: Theſe Errors, God knows, are too often committed on both hands. I beg moſt heartily of my dear Lord and Maſter, that what I have, or may ſay, may not one tittle of it be perverted to his diſhonor, or the prejudice of one Soul, which, I hope, is moſt ſincerely calculated for his Glory in their welfare.

Bleſſed God, I know, by happy Experience, thy Spirit ſpirits all Truths, that become words of Life and Power; I moſt humbly beſeech Thee therefore ſo to influence them by thy heavenly Benediction, and ſpecial directive Providence, that they may truly ſubſerve the honeſt intentions of an upright Heart. Let thy holy Spirit breath upon them, and fill theſe

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weak attempts with his energy, that the glory may entirely be thine, to whom alone it's due, for ſweet Jeſus's ſake. *Amen.*

Let none be dejected under the want, abatement, or loſs of their Comforts, if they have not notoriouſly ſinn'd them away, but maintain'd Faith and a good Conſcience, and ſtill hold their integrity, tho' with many infirmities. Comforts are great Bleſſings, but not eſſential to a Chriſtian; they quicken and enliven him to Duty, but Faith which purifies the Heart, productive of holineſs in the Life, really denominates him. Peace may remain when raviſhing Joys ſeem at an end, which ſome too much concern'd at, may really hazard a breach in their Peace: And as the Joy of the Lord is our ſtrength, ſo the loſs of it, if we don't ſpur up our diligence in proportion, to ſupply its defect, our Graces, for want of Exerciſe, fall into a *Languor*. But let none miſtake a meer declenſion of Joy and Comfort, for a declenſion of Grace, eſpecially if their Peace be not broken, which often happens; nor abſolutely if it be; becauſe tho' Temptation may royle our Peace, yet as it exerciſes Grace, that conquers, it ſtrengthens it; tho' the force of the Conflict for a time, may embarraſs it. Where there is the Life of Grace, there will be growth, which is as true and beneficial, when the Soul ſtrikes deeper rooting in Humility, Self judging and Dependance, as when it ſprings up in holy Joy; the former is the

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ſure Foundation of the latter. Pride and Conceit, as they prevail, eclipſe all true comfort; if it thrive in the ſhade of thoſe Vices, they are not from the Sun of Righteouſneſs, but the meer Moon-ſhine of Fanſie, or *Lucifer*'s deluſions. Never is a Soul meaner in its own views, nor more entirely devoted to God's Service, than when ſhe taſts the true and kindly Fruits of Paradiſe; this opens her Eyes to ſee her nothingneſs, the beſt ſhe can do, to be infinitely beneath God's acceptance. The Eating forbidden Fruit open'd the Eyes of our firſt Parents, only to ſee their Shame and Miſery, but if we gather this lawful Fruit offer'd us, 'twill make us ſee our Remedy, as well as our Nakedneſs and Miſery.

Some have the boldneſs to tell us, all the Conſolations we have been ſpeaking of, are but the tranſports of ſuperſtitious Whimſies, ſtrong Fanſies, the natural effects of the blithe motions of the Blood and Spirits, or the meer Phrenſie and Vertigoes of a Religioſo's Brain. But theſe being Men of no Religion, the allegations of ſuch improper judges are of no importance; becauſe having made no trial of the Chriſtian Principles, they can form no ſound judgment of their effects. Such deſerve no anſwer, but contempt or pity, which they ſeem to be full of, while they diſcourſe of theſe matters: like ſome Bedlamites in Chains and Straw, by the volatility of a Lunatick Fancy, imagining themſelves Kings and Queens, fall to pi-

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tying all the reſt of the World, as their Vaſſals.

The miſchief is, theſe have ting'd better Men in part, with their Principles: Some that paſs for good Men, write and talk ſo much of a Mechanical Religion, and run it ſo far, as ſcare to diſtinguiſh it from what's real; making Fancy, and a ſanguine Conſtitution, to vie with the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt. They diſcourſe, as if trouble of Mind was nothing but the diſorder of the Body; and ridicule legal ſorrow for Sin, and terrors of Conſcience, as only the Fumes of the Spleen; and rally thoſe that take comfort from their paſt Sorrows and Humiliations, as the beginnings, or at leaſt preparatives to true Repentance, only as diſtemper'd Melancholicks: And then no wonder if they make Mechaniſm compleat their project, and tell them, as they were beholden to the diſorders of Nature for their Troubles, ſo they are to its reſtitution for their Comforts. Thus theſe Philoſophick Divines ſtrengthen the hands of the Scepticks and Materialiſts, and diſcourage poor doubting Chriſtians.

I fear there's too much Mechanick Religion in the World; and believe it's Charity to detect it; but caution is needful, leſt while Error be pull'd down with violence, the foundation of Truth be ſhaken, or any of the beauteous Stones of that Fabrick be defac'd. It fares in this Caſe, as in moſt, when Men run from one extream with fierceneſs, they often over-

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ſhoot the Mark, and run into another. Errors meerly ſupported by mockery and pageantry, are ſometimes better left to fall of themſelves, as uſually they do, than precipitated with ſuch force, as to ſhake any comfortable Truth. Such as have ſlight thoughts of Terrors of Conſcience, and make them little more than the workings of the Hypochondries, I may be confident are utter ſtrangers to experiences of that kind: Had they once felt them, 'twould ſtrangely alter their apprehenſions, and force them to drop more feeling expreſſions.

Certainly, there is as much difference between meer Melancholy, and terrors of Conſcience, as there is between painted and real Fire, tho' they influence one the other reciprocally, and often are confounded. And as widely different are the Mechanick illuſions of the Blood and Spirits, *&c.* in the mimickry of Divine Conſolations, as is real Eating, and the dreaming of it only. *Peace in believing, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, are like the natural Heat of the Body, which preſerves the Conſtitution, rendring it active on all occaſions: But what is meerly the reſult of Mechaniſm, is like the Feveriſh heat, which raiſes *Deliriums* in the Brain, by the high advances of the Juices of the Body, but leaves Nature at laſt much lower, cold and weak, diſpirited, and unfit for action. The Divine Illapſes, are ſoft and ſweet, not like the falſe, more labour'd and noiſie, that leave a Man worſe than they found

found him; but like the refreſhing Air, or Sun-beams, which cheriſh and delight Nature, and leave the Soul in a Heavenly calm. God often gives in theſe after difficult Trials, or in them; but then they are uſually ſet by, like Cordials, when the fainting Fit is over. He that ne'er taſted good Wine, takes up with what he can get, and thinks it ſo; but he that has taſted both, is the moſt competent Judge of the difference; 'tis ſo in the Caſe before us, in the Spiritual Taſt, as in the Natural.

I muſt with ſhame confeſs, that while the Sun thus ſhined upon me, I did not fear, nor prepare as I ſhould for a ſhower. I forgot too much the Days of Darkneſs elapſed, and thought the bitterneſs of Death was over, and that my Neſt was made on high. Thus I fondly ſang a *Requiem* to my Soul, tho' with hearty Praiſes to God, my great and only deliverer. This alas! made me too much forget my danger ſtill behind; and tho' I had read and heard many ſuitable Warnings; that many after great Conſolations, had fool'd themſelves and ne'er recover'd them, but went howling to their Graves; yet I was too confident, and apply'd not the Rules home to my ſelf.

Let all take warning, ſee their danger, and the Devil's Deſign in *Embryo*, before he form the Brat, and bring it forth with their Pains and Sorrows. God ſuffer'd me long to bask in theſe refreſhing Sun-beams, to ſolace my dark Soul, but at laſt gave

me to underſtand, I muſt ſtand upon my guard better, or the Clouds would threaten to return after the Rain.

He now ſuffer'd an old Temptation to give me a ſhock, which ſet upon me going to the Sacrament, and ſomewhat diſorder'd me. Thro' God's aſſiſtance, I balk'd not the Duty, which I thought a dangerous yielding to the Adverſary, which encourages him to redouble the On-ſet. In this Caſe he deſigns to affright from Duty; or diſtract in it: The firſt is his great Mark, as of moſt conſequence; for if he carry this Point, freedom may enſue, but with a moſt treacherous deſign, to renew the attack with more force the next opportunity: Now the Soul being weaken'd for want of its repaſt, and remembring the Eaſe that formerly follow'd forbearance, it's too ready to compound, and cloſe with theſe baſe terms of Peace, which give the Devil vaſt advantage. I Bleſs God he got neither of the Points againſt me, which ſhould encourage all to truſt God, and defie him: A cloudineſs did hang upon me, but at my return, I reſolv'd to ſing a Pſalm, hoping God would diſpel all; I dip'd on the 6th Pſalm, reſumed courage from ſome expreſſions there, I thought remarkable, to encourage my hopes; ſo, I bleſs God, all blew over and ne'er yet return'd.

This did me great ſervice; convinc'd me I could ne'er be ſafe here, but in the way of Duty, and with great circumſpection; that the Enemy is moſt vigilant

and

and dangerous, while I'm moſt ſecure. Lord, hold Thou me up, and I ſhall be ſafe; for I find I fall, the Moment Thou ſtand'ſt not by me.

" Moſt holy God, 'tis of thy Mercy a-
" lone I'm not utterly conſum'd! How has
" thy ſovereign Grace prevented me! and
" thy boundleſs Mercy ſuccour'd me in
" my greateſt extremity! How free were
" thy Favours, and overflowing thy good-
" neſs! To diſpoſe me to love and re-
" joyce in Thee, was wondrous condeſcen-
" tion, who juſtly might have been the
" Trophy of thy fury: O while I have a
" Heart to conceive, and a Tongue to
" utter thy Praiſes, let them be honor'd
" with the employ of thy Service. Ever
" help me to villifie and depreſs my wretch-
" ed Self, that I may be the better fitted
" to exalt thy Majeſty: Keep me con-
" tinually cloſe to Thee, the Fountain of
" Life; make me watchful and depen-
" dant, ever ſeeking Thy Glory, the way
" to true ſafety. Pity an indigent Crea-
" ture, that feels he has no ſtrength but
" in the power of thy bleſſed Spirit: For-
" ſake not one that deſires entirely to
" truſt in Thee. O hold up my goings
" in Thy Paths: Incline my Heart to
" Thy Teſtimonies: Put Thy Fear into
" my inward Parts, that I ne'er de-
" part from Thee: Make me to go in
" the Path of Thy Commandments: En-
" large my Heart, that I may run the
" way of them: Teach me, O Lord, the
" way of Thy Statutes, that I may keep

" them to the end: Hold me by the
" Right-Hand of Thy faithfulneſs; and
" ſince nothing leſs can, I beſeech Thee
" keep me by Thy mighty Power, thro'
" Faith unto Salvation; for ſweet Jeſus's
" ſake. *Amen.*

Such is our frailty, that when plung'd in depths we deſpond; on the other hand, Proſperity blotes us with ſtrange, fond conceits: While our Mountain ſeems to ſtand ſtrong, we think it immoveable; but God no ſooner hides his Face, but we are troubled. Notions we often have, and talk ſuitably, but our real ſinkings and ſoarings, bewray our feebleneſs: Nothing ſhort of God's mighty aſſiſtance, can ballance the inequallity of our courſes, and keep us ſteddy under great changes: Extreams of this nature ſet off one the other; when we paſs from extremity of Anguiſh, to great Joys, it ſo tranſports the Affections, that they get head of Reaſon, and then ſome diſorder enſues. The Grace of God, that Pillar of our Souls, we are too ready rather to complement, than heartily to ask it, and really depend upon it; or if we do, we are then prone to be too negligent in the uſe of means: I know vaſt is the difference between good and bad Mens failures of this nature, but ſtill the beſt, are ſome way tardy in this kind.

This was too much my own Caſe. I wrong'd God extreamly in my diſtreſs, by my wicked cenſures; and when the Tide turn'd, my Head turn'd round with my

my Advancement: When 'twas Night, I ſaid it would ne'er be Day, but the glories of that happy Morning, made me think a change at too great a diſtance. I felt the Joy of the Lord my ſtrength, I delighted in God and Duty, but ſtill was not enough wary. I beg others to obſerve my failings, to cheriſh caution: For nothing will be found more cutting than great Errors thus committed on either hand. When God ſurpriz'd me with his Favours, I bluſh'd in confuſion at my raſh, haſty concluſions, brooded by Deſpair; and tho', I bleſs God, my Peace is not yet broken, thro' the amazing Patience of the bleſſed Jeſus, yet the firſt eclipſe of my Comforts alarm'd me with ſome ſharp reflexions on my Folly.

O my dear God, deliver me, I humbly beſeech Thee, from a vain hope, that will prove like the giving up of the Ghoſt: Ne'er ſuffer me to accept of a falſe peace, which tends to ſluggiſhneſs and ſecurity. Empty me from Veſſel to Veſſel, rather than I ſhould ſettle on my Lees. I beg I may love Thee for thy lovelineſs and benignity; but loſe me not, whatever ſeverities it coſt me: And when thy overflowing goodneſs ſhall indulge me with thy Conſolations, help me to deſire and uſe them for vigor in Obedience. And *may the God of Peace make* me *perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in me that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, thro' Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

The firſt growing miſchief I obſerv'd, was for want of timely care in the government of my Thoughts. I perceiv'd not at firſt the ill conſequences of my neglect, till my danger convinc'd me. At firſt, my Mind ſeem'd tractable, I could lay by vain thoughts at pleaſure, but the conceit laſted not long; they gradually ſtole upon me with great ſtrength and prevalency, and prov'd inlets to many diſorders, and have ſince coſt me many a hard Tug. I find them moſt urgent in a Morning, when I ſhou'd be ſetting my Spirit right for the whole Day, and juſt before holy Duties, to unhinge my affections when they ſhould be moſt warm and recollected: The contrivance that here appears, and the ill effects of yeilding, together with the violence they ſometimes preſs upon me, make me ſuſpect more than the meer bublings of my own Heart. They inſinuate themſelves very ſpeciouſly, but with the ſtrength of a Charm inſenſibly, but too prevalently; and when they have faſten'd, 'tis difficult to diſcharge them.

The Mind being active, will play with ſtraws, if it hath not ſomething ſolid to work upon; Vanity emaſculates it, and utterly indiſpoſes for any good employ. Thoughts and Life, are ever of a piece; they are the ſpring of Actions; the firſt born of the Soul; the iſſues of Life or Death; be upon your guard here, or your labour will be ever to begin in Religion. Vain Thoughts draw off the Heart from God,

God, and ingroſs the Affections: They are the root of backwardneſs to holy Duties, of deadneſs and diſtraction in them. Our Enemy knows, communion with God is the very life of our Souls; while we live much above, in cloſe walking with him, we die apace to the World, and his Temptations; his great Buſineſs therefore is, to rive us off this lify converſe, by ſome ſtratagem, and this is one of the moſt ſucceſsful. Good Men are not ſo alarm'd at theſe ſuggeſtions, as at groſſer Temptations: The beſt are not perfectly exempted from them, and the ſenſe of this, makes ſome leſs ſhie of admitting them; but when they tend towards an habitual prevalency, ſad are the conſequences: Corruptions that were ſuppos'd extinct, begin to revive, and if care be not taken, will gather ſtrength apace, and coſt much trouble and hazard. I believe I ſpeak now to the feeling of many, however, I'm ſure to my own.

The ſure Method to get rid of theſe devourers of precious time, which we ſhould eſteem as the Blood of our Souls, while it runs waſt, is to preſs continually, as we can, with holy violence, into the ſecret of God's Preſence, in variety of holy Exerciſes; beſeeching him to unite our Hearts in the Fear and Love of his holy Name, to take them into his own Hand, which otherwiſe diffuſe like Water.

When firſt awake, let us conſider who are the Competitors for the firſt born of

our Thoughts and Affections: God and the World ſollicit for admittance, and it nearly concerns us, which we firſt open the Door to. The choice of Friends we now make, bids fair to ſtick by us the whole Day: What's bad, is as bold to plead Preſcription, and keep Poſſeſſion; and the preference yeilded to our Enemies, provokes our beſt Friend to retire; we may eaſily then foreſee the ſucceſs of that Day. O what an affront is this to the Majeſty of Heaven, ſtooping to vile Worms, to repulſe his kind offers, and let in Furies to the infinite hazard of our peace and ſafety! Shall God ſollicit us by his holy Spirit, to ask his beſt Gifts, and be beſt pleas'd when we ask the greateſt with importunity? And ſhall we, inſtead of ſeeking his Face, that we may live for ever, lift our Souls to Vanity, or what's worſe? With what diſdain ſhould we reject ſollicitations of this kind, ſo provoking to him, and detrimental to our beſt intereſt? If we have any ſenſe of true honor, gratitude, happineſs, how do they all conjure us to care and reſolution in this kind?

We are too apt to confine Religion to our Knees; whereas ſolemn Duties ſhould be look'd upon as preparatives to a heavenly Converſation all the Day long; that we may be always in the fear of God, ſo in the comforts of his holy Spirit: His Eye is ne'er off us for good; let the Eye of our Souls then be as much as poſſible faſten'd upon him, who is our Life, and only

only Happineſs. Infinite are the advantages and pleaſures of ſuch a converſe: To get into the ſecret of God's preſence, and abide there, is a Heaven upon Earth: The happy Souls that know it, know no Words can expreſs it: Nothing are the Charms of this vain flattering World, when they are in the Mount with God; it's then out of their Hearts, and under their Feet, and their Faces ſhining with Peace and Comfort; by the Light of thoſe heavenly Rays, they behold the World as a dark nothing. Tho' theſe enjoyments are not conſtant, but now and then diſpenſed, to draw us upward; yet the bleſſed Frames they leave us in, and the ſtrong tendency they impreſs upon our deſires, diſpoſe us much for a cloſe walking with God, in an even courſe of Communion with him.

Try the force of ſolemn Meditation; occaſional Reflections; Self- Examination: Learn the Art of ſpirituallizing Objects, and ordinary occurrences; of obſerving God's Providences, darting up frequently holy thoughts by way of Prayer, Praiſe, and Thankſgiving: Strive to habituate this courſe: for though the Heart reluct much at firſt, cuſtom renders it familiar, natural, eaſy, and pleaſant. Be ſure the oppoſition Satan and thy ſtubborn Will and carnal Affections make againſt theſe Exerciſes, evidently declare their uſefulneſs and excellency: They are the very Springs that feed the ſpiritual Life; and fit and diſpoſe the Soul with cheerfulneſs to return to ſolemn Duties: To Meditate cloſe till

Monſr. Juricu's *Chriſtian Devotion, I now read with great delight and advantage; which gave a ſatisfactory account of the true ſources of Indevotion.*

till affections glow, fits greatly for Prayer; this is watching to Prayer, and produces watchfulneſs in it; and a Soul thus prayerful, will be powerful with God, and againſt the remains of indwelling Sin: This is the way to pray evermore, *i. e.* to be in a fit temper, and diſpoſition, and readineſs, often to perform the Duty. Our Hearts are ready to trifle in every thing, which producing little or no effect, we are ready to entertain low thoughts of theſe holy Exerciſes, while the fault is only in our ſelves; meaſuring moſt unreaſonably the nature and effects of them, not by what they really are, and actually afford others in their regular uſe, but by what we make them, by our perverting them. Theſe Duties rightly managed will be found the great ſecrets of true Chriſtianity.

Take heed of unſeaſonable good Thoughts: God loves order, and deſigns not one Ordinance ſhould joſtle out another: We can't think even good Motions to come from the Holy Spirit, when they call us off from the Worſhip we are engag'd in, but rather Satan *transform'd into an Angel of Light*: Theſe of late, I have found very preſſing and enſnaring; they bolt in with ſtrange vivacity in publick Duties. O the infinite danger we are in on all hands! Lord deliver us from theſe Shafts out of Satan's Quiver, in a heavenly diſguiſe.

Reſt in no Attainments, but preſs on towards perfection; grapple with all difficulties in the Strength of Jeſus: Labour as much as is poſſible, to uſe the World with a holy indifference: Look thro' the miſts of time, to things not ſeen: Carry intentions of God's Glory, and an Eye to the Honor of Religion, thro' all ſecular Affairs: Receive all the Enjoyments of Senſe, as from his Hand, which will diſpoſe to moderation and ſobriety, and give a double ſweetneſs to all, as coming from his love; and while we thus taſt his Bounty, 'twill be natural for us to indite and live his Praiſe. Senſuallity is quite oppoſite to ſpiritual Joy: *Senſual, not having the Spirit*, as St. *Jude* ſays; a Senſual genius, and the Croſs of Chriſt, will ne'er agree: The Apoſtle puts *Senſual* and *Deviliſh* together. Certainly Religion requires a greater Mortification to the pleaſures of the Palate, than is generally thought: There is a ſenſuallizing diſpoſition, where there may be little Intemperance as to quantity; much gratifying the Appetite, without Gluttony or Drunkenneſs: Many are ſtrong to drink Wine without diſcompoſure, who are far from being Innocent; ſuch loſe much Peace, and hazard their Souls.

Self-denial is the very Fund of ſpiritual Comfort: What we refuſe the Body, is repay'd to the Soul in Divine Repaſts, infinitely more preferable: The pleaſures of Senſe are ſoon roll'd over the Tongue, and die away; but a good Conſcience is

a continual Feaſt. We naturally affect ſuperiority over others, but too much neglect the government of our ſelves, in which conſiſts our ſafety and happineſs: Self-Conqueſt is moſt difficult, but moſt glorious.

Senſual delights, tho' moderate, are not always lawful, when they draw us too much from ſpiritual Objects, and vitiate ſpiritual Senſations: Without great care, like Lime-Twigs, they entangle the Soul, and hinder her from aſpiring upwards to her proper Element. We may refuſe a liquorice Appetite, and yet not ſtarve our Bodies; and ſtudy Mortification, without running into conceits of Works of Supererrogation. The Auſterities of the Primitive Chriſtians train'd them for bearing the Croſs, till ſuperſtition, thro' the Wiles of Satan, faſten'd an ill imputation on them, ſolely owing to their perverſion. I doubt not but the Devil made his Earnings of the uſe of Superſtitious rigors, and the neglect of true Diſcipline, that abuſe fomented; a Diſeaſe very incident to humane Nature.

O Father of Spirits, help me to bring every Thought and Imagination in ſubjection to thy Chriſt: Renew in me a right Spirit, ever aſpiring to Thee, the Spring-head of all true delight; aſſiſt me in keeping under the Body; ſpirituallize my Affections: Impreſs upon my Soul a powerful practick ſenſe of theſe great Duties, that I may not only know, but do thy Bleſ-

Bleſſed Will, and finally by thy Mercy obtain everlaſting Life, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

'Tis ſome Comfort, even under the loſs of Comforts, to think thoſe could not be falſe and imaginary, that are ſo much out of our Power; and abate with our failures. What are real, keep pace with Obedience; what are not, out-run it; and ſo many difficulties we meet with to interrupt it, that our Conſolations muſt be variable. God was pleaſed, under my late droopings, to revive me by conſiderations of this nature, particularly in reading the latter part of Mr. *Bolton*'s *Directions for Walking with God:* Where he has theſe expreſſions. "That very thing which makes "many a true hearted Chriſtian doubt of p. 335. "himſelf, and of the ſoundneſs of his ſpi- "ritual State, ſhould put him out of all "doubt: Even often Exerciſe with doubts, "Temptations, multiply'd attempts againſt "his Faith, pray'd againſt and oppos'd, "with cleaving unto Chriſt. Doubtleſs "that Faith which is never aſſaulted with "doubting, is but a Fancy: Aſſuredly "that aſſurance which is ever ſecure, is "but a Dream.

I met with great ſupport likewiſe from Dr. *Sibbs* on *Canticles*, and Mr. *Bain*'s Letters, where are excellent Old Truths. The reading the Lives of excellent Men, I found gave me a powerful whet under ſpiritual *Languors*. *Greenham*, an Ancient but Judicious Author, in the Letters at the end of his Works, gives very conſo-

latory

latory Advice to doubting, tempted Chriſtians: He pays every where great deference to the Grace of God, but holds the ballance true, entring ſmart Caveats againſt preſumption: P. 764. he has this Expreſſion: " To leave any good thing " undone, even for a Moment, is contrary " to perſeverance. But becauſe the Stile of the Ancients is plain and homely, they are generally neglected; ſome, as one well expreſſes it, deſiring Gold to be gilded, can't down with Truth but in ſoft Language: But I bleſs God heartily for the excellent helps I have had from them.

We ſhould not be dejected, when we find a ſuſpence of former Joy and Comfort, if we perſevere in Obedience: While we have the Foundation, and find the ſuperſtructure advancing, let us leave theſe finiſhing Strokes to the unerring hand of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, who will be ſure to time things in Number, Weight, and Meaſure: When comfort thus comes, 'twill have a double ſweetneſs, as coming in Seaſon, and with God's good Will. It's true, we are bid to *rejoice, and again rejoice*; and the Apoſtle prays for Joy, as well as Grace, in many places, and no doubt we may for Strength in God's Service, where it's of ſingular Uſe: Yet God for wiſe Reaſons often withholds it; to exerciſe Faith, Humility, and Dependance.

Pride, and fond Conceits of our own Self-ſufficiency, ſtick as cloſe to us as our Natures; which, ſhould they prevail, God knows would undo us: Therefore he often ſub-

ſubſtracts theſe ſweet aids, to let us feel our own weakneſs, to beat down preſumption. When we carry a high Sail of Comfort, if Watchfulneſs and Humility be not the Ballaſt, a ſudden guſt of Temptation may over-ſet us: God that foreſees our dangers, often in kindneſs with-holds theſe ſweet Breezes, when we have not Skill to trim the Veſſel. The Apoſtle's *Thorn in the Fleſh*, ſeems rather preventive than corrective: To hinder a turgency of Spirit after his Rapture, rather than to prick the bladder of Pride conſummated. And if ſo holy a Perſon needed it, what can we think of our ſelves?

As the Exerciſe of Faith, without comfortable feelings, is often moſt profitable for us; ſo it's moſt pleaſing ſometimes to God: He expects and delights to be truſted, when Rewards don't immediately follow Work, nay, tho' he ſeem to frown upon us, and leave us to many hard pulls. As this is the higheſt and pureſt Obedience, ſo it's infinitely pleaſing to him, and in due time will be Crown'd with the moſt glorious Reward. This trains the Soul to patient waiting on God, Faith grows by Exerciſe, which exceedingly glorifies him. This therefore is a very ſafe State, and we ſhould for that Reaſon, comply with the Diſpenſation. "Faith, Dickſon *on*
"ſays one, is our ſureſt holding of God's *Pſal.* 116.
"Bleſſings, more ſure than preſent Senſe,
"or paſt Experience, or begun Poſſeſſi-
"on; for all thoſe may be interrupted,
"and overclouded; but Faith having hold

"on

Eccl. Pol. p. 552.

" on God's Word, holds faſt, when all " things elſe fail. The Judicious *Hooker*, ſays, " Too much ſpiritual Joy, " wou'd make us Wantons. Happier a " great deal is that Man's Caſe, whoſe " Soul by inward deſolation is humbled, " than he whoſe Heart is thro' abundance " of ſpiritual delight lifted up above mea- " ſure. Better it is ſometimes to go down " into the Pit with him, who beholding " darkneſs, and bewailing the loſs of in- " ward Joy and Conſolation, crieth from " the bottom of the loweſt Hell; My " God, my God, why haſt Thou forſaken " me! than continually to walk Arm " in Arm with Angels, to ſit, as it were, " in *Abraham*'s Boſom, and to have no " thought: But I thank my God, it's not " with me, as it's with other Men; no, " God will have them, that ſhall walk in " Light, to feel now and then, what it is " to ſit in the ſhadow of Death.

The Ways of God *are Pleaſantneſs, and his Paths are Peace*; Virtue is its own reward, and Piety will be crown'd with Joy; yet ſome holy Souls ſpend great part of their Days in hard Combats, and ſome die under a Cloud, without that Joy and Comfort many Experience: He ſuffers them to conflict with Winds and Waves, Devils and Temptations, to the very Mouth of the Harbour, and all for wiſe and holy Reaſons; to brighten their Crowns, and render them more weighty; ſuch hard Exerciſes encreaſing the Faith and Patience of the Saints; to teach us entire

tire ſubmiſſion to his Will, when he withholds preſent retributions; to make us acquieſce in all his Diſpenſations, and content our ſelves with glorifying him by any Methods of his chooſing, tho' unpleaſant to us: And ſometimes in judgment to wicked Men, who not profiting by the holy Lives of the Saints, are juſtly debarr'd of advantages by their Death: When pious Men die without Comfort, under Doubts and Fears, bad Men harden themſelves in Opinions that undervalue Piety, and confirm them in their evil Courſes, eſpecially when they obſerve wicked Men die ſtupid, or with flattering hopes.

Strange are the Judgments, ſhall I call them, or rather the Fanſies moſt Men form of the latter ends of Good and Bad Men. A ſhort, *Lord have Mercy on me*, and a few ſeeming Penitent expreſſions, in the opinion of many, wafts the worſt to Heaven; tho' all generally proceed from no true ſenſe of Sin, or concern for diſhonoring their Maker, but the meer fear of Hell, as is apparent by their returning to Folly upon their Recovery: And ſometimes meer ſtupidity ſhall entitle them to ſafety, in ſome ſottiſh Opinions. I ſpeak not againſt charitable apprehenſions, where there is the leaſt true grounds for it; nor deny Repentance to be the beſt thing; the worſt at any time can ſet about; or that God does not ſometimes ſurprizingly ſtep in and reſcue Souls, even long after the eleventh Hour, even at the

laſt; tho' generally it prove like ordinary Executions, where one is pardon'd, a Hundred die; and if ſome be reprieved a while, yet after, are led forth to Execution.

And as ready are the ſame Perſons to cenſure the Generation of the Righteous, let their Lives be ne'er ſo holy, if they be but a little over-caſt in their laſt Moments. The Learned, Pious and Laborious *Perkins*, as Dr. *Fuller* ſtiles him, dy'd crying for Mercy to God; upon which ſome immediately cenſur'd him as Deſpairing: The Dr. in writing his Life vindicates him. "Sometimes, ſays he, God "ſeemingly leaves his Saints, when they "leave the World, plunging them on their "Death-Beds in deep Temptations, and caſting their Souls down to Hell, to rebound "the higher to Heaven. Beſides, the Devil is moſt buſy on the laſt Day of his "Term; and a Tenant to be outed, cares "not what miſchief he doth. But here "was no ſuch matter. Indeed he always "cry'd out, Mercy, Mercy, which ſome "ſtanders by miſinterpreted for Deſpair, "as if he felt not God's Favour, becauſe "he call'd for it: Whereas Mercy is a "Grace which they hold the faſteſt, that "moſt catch after it. The ever memorable Primate, Arch-Biſhop *Uſher*, dy'd praying for the Forgiveneſs of his Sins; and added: "But, Lord, in ſpecial forgive "my *Sins of Omiſſion*. Herein he had his wiſh, which he often us'd; that he might die

Vid Clark's *Lives.*

as

as Mr. *Perkins*, who expir'd crying for Mercy.

'Tis a bleſſed State, no doubt, to die with the ſweet aſſurance of God's Love, as it were in the Lap of Bleſſedneſs. This, with ſubmiſſion, we may pray for, and ſhou'd prepare for, by vigorous acts of Faith, cloſe walking with God, abounding in purity of Heart, holineſs of Life, and the Fruits of Righteouſneſs; and then ſuperſede our own deſires, acquieſcing in God's holy Will, as may moſt ſubſerve his Glory. Then undoubtedly the iſſue will be glorious; for none can loſe by denying themſelves for his Honor; and tho' for wiſe Reaſons, God ſuffer our Sun to ſet in a Cloud, 'twill riſe with the more Radiancy. Who can die better or ſafer, than in asking Mercy and Forgiveneſs? And if ſuch great, holy, indefatigable Souls die thus, and are ſo affected with their Sins of Omiſſion, what Care and Humility does this teach us; who trifle away ſo many bleſſed Seaſons, and too little regard our Omiſſions? Lord, if it be thus done to the green Tree, what ſhall become of the dry?

O fit us all for our latter end, ſtand by us in the Hour and Article of Death, that we fall not from Thee and our Stedfaſtneſs, thro' the prevalency of any Temptation: Grant thy unworthy Servant a peculiar return of this Prayer in his greateſt diſtreſs, which he earneſtly deſires may ever come up in Remembrance before Thee. And help us all in the time of

this Mortal Life, to hang a Stock of ardent Prayers upon the File, which God may remember and anſwer in this our extremity: O ſtand by us in our dying Agonies, who art our only Strength, in the great and laſt aſſaults of the Powers of Darkneſs; and if it be thy Will, give an abundant entrance into thy reviving Preſence: So forward us by thy continual aids, that we living the Life of the Righteous, may have our end like theirs, full of Peace and aſſurance for ever: But if our Death muſt be full of conflict and deſertion, as our Sins deſerve, and thy Glory may require; teach us to acquieſce, and meekly accept the puniſhment of our faults, and with holy truſt, to cleave cloſe to thy pretious Chriſt, and gracious Promiſes, for his ſake. *Amen.*

Our great danger is any unmortify'd Luſt, leaſt any Root of bitterneſs ſpring in our Souls to trouble our Peace living or dying; which may cauſe us juſtly to call in queſtion our Sincerity. Should our pretended Comforts grow with theſe curſed Weeds, 'twould be the foreſt Judgment on this ſide Hell; for they keep us in the very Suburbs of it. If we ſpare our Sins, the time is coming, that God and Conſcience will not ſpare us: Let us then be perſuaded by all that's dear to us, to ſacrifice theſe darlings. Should God ſuffer us to build high on ſo rotten a Foundation, 'twould make our fall the greater: Let us reſolutely then lay the Ax to the Root of the Tree, and after that, ſtrive

to

to ſtub up every Fibre of Iniquity: When thus the rubbiſh is removed, and the ground clear'd, let us Build and Plant afreſh, begging the help and ſhowers of Heaven; ſo when the Winds blow, and Waves beat, our Fabrick will ſtand, and our Plantation yeild us Fruit in due Seaſon; as *Trees planted by the Rivers of Water, whoſe Leaves ſhall not wither, and their Fruit ſhall proſper:* Our Profeſſion ſhall not be tarniſh'd, and we ſhall taſt the delicious Fruits of Paradice.

Aſſurance is very rare; and what comes and is kept eaſily is ſuſpicious. 'Tis not for a poor, vile, deſpicable Worm, newly drag'd up from the Gates of the Grave and Hell, to pretend to ſo great a Favour, 'tis a vaſt one he is not free among Dead and loſt; but God forbid he ſhould nullifie or depretiate Divine Gifts, or ſeem to envy and malign any holy, happy Souls, bleſſed with this Heaven upon Earth. God for wiſe Reaſons often denies it the Strong, and indulges the Weak with it, as appears in the courſe of his Providence. 'Tis uſually for great Services in Life, or for a glorious bleſſed Death, to encourage others: 'Tis fallacy and deluſion then, for the lazy, carnal and ſecure, to pretend to it: But tho' Dreamers think themſelves awake, yet ſuch, I hope, as really are, may know it, and will not eaſily be perſuaded they do but Dream. Let the Men of Parts and Learning try their Talent, and ſee if they can perſuade ſuch out of their Senſes: There is a Spiritual Senſation, as well as

a Natural, and ſuch as are under the true Power of it, will as ſoon renounce the one as the other. Such as read the ingenious *Culverwell*, will ſee the Reaſons why this Doctrine is exploded, and what's the proper uſe of it, *&c.* And ſuch as peruſe a Book entitled, *The Office of the Spirit to Believers*, will find it as uſeful, as 'tis ſcarce, if they would feel the practick part, and the conſolations which attend it, wherein conſiſts the chief Excellency of the Principles of Chriſtianity.

Whitestone.

Hickman.

It ſeems to be the great deſign of the Epiſtle of St. *John* to prove it; that we might *know we have eternal Life*; and are *paſs'd from Death to Life.* And we have Inſtances in the Martyrs, and many others. I ſhall mention but one, that of Mr. *Peacock*, Tutor to ſome young Gentlemen at *Oxford*, who fell into deep deſertion and terrible Temptations on his Death-Bed; but after deſperate Conflicts, and many deſponding Expreſſions, at length recovering a compoſed Mind, addreſs'd himſelf to his Pupils, and all about him, in the following Terms: "Live in God's "Fear, that you may die in his Favour, "otherwiſe the Ox and Aſs will condemn "you: And three Hours before his Death, he thus expreſs'd himſelf. *Quid de ſalute meâ ſentiam, expectatis explicari? uſq; adeo indulget Deus eis, quos ſemel dilexerit, ut eos nunquam deſerat; atq; ideo in cœlos me tranſiturum pro certo habeo: feliciſſima ſunt ea vincula, in quibus me confixit Deus meus benigniſſimus.* "Do you expect to know "what

Clark's *Example. p.* 174. *Vol.* 2.

" what I think of my Salvation? So very
" indulgent is God, to thoſe he once loves,
" that he ne'er forſakes them; and there-
" fore I'm ſure I'm going to Heaven:
" Moſt happy were thoſe Bands my moſt
" gracious God tied me with,

The Pious and Learned *Mede* tells us, *Diſc.* 53. *p.* 303.
" There is but one thing in the World
" can make this miſerable Life happy unto
" us, and that is, ſo to demean our ſelves
" while we live here, as that we may be
" aſſured of the Life to come. He that *p.* 309.
" walks in the ways of God, and makes
" Conſcience to keep his Commands, may
" hereby infallibly know, he knows Chriſt,
" that his Faith is a true Faith, and that
" he ſhall be ſaved everlaſtingly. The
" Reaſon is plain; good Works are
" the fruit of Faith, and a godly Con-
" verſation is the Work of God's holy
" Spirit. Whoever Chriſt accepts as a Ser-
" vant, he gives the Token of his Spirit,
" the Grace which enlivens and quickens
" the Heart and Will to his Service. As
" the Heat of Fire warms all near it, ſo
" the Spirit of Chriſt kindles this Grace
" in every Heart that Faith links to him:
" The Fruit whereof is that infallible Li-
" very, whereby every one that wears it, may
" know himſelf to be his Servant. He
" that hath this evidence, may dare the
" Devil to his Face: He that hath this,
" hath the broad Seal of Eternal Life, and
" ſuch a Man ſhall live for ever. But as
this excellent Author lays the true ground-
work of Aſſurance, ſo he conſults profeſſed-

ly for the infirmities of the weak in this particular.

Some have taught that Aſſurance was of the Eſſence of Faith; and have ſuppos'd ſuch deep degrees of Humiliation, and ſome ſtrange quallifications neceſſary for obtaining a ſaving intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, as have troubled the Spirits of the ſtrongeſt Chriſtians, and ſorely wounded the weak: This may be ſeen at large in *Gil. Firmin*'s Real Chriſtian, a Book worth the Reading on this and many other occaſions. He there gives an Inſtance of a very good Man, who afflicted many by the ſeverity of his Doctrines, whom God ſeem'd very much to leave in the dark, when he approach'd his End. Tho' theſe harſh Opinions ſeem now fallen aſleep, yet ſome there are, that ſtill much afflict the ſincere, but weak: There are Babes in Chriſt, that have need of Milk, as well as the ſtrong and full grown that can bear ſtrong Meat.

While true Grace is maintain'd abſolutely to conſiſt not in kind, but degree,
Ezek. 13.22. the Hearts of many may be made ſad God would not have made ſo: There certainly is great danger of this, as well as of ſtrengthening the Hands of the Wicked. A State of Perfection is certainly moſt ſafe and pleaſant, and he that does not heartily aſpire after it, has juſt Reaſon to call in queſtion his ſincerity: But God forbid any ſhould, for want of Caution, be wounded in the Houſe of their Friends. There are bruiſed Reeds and ſmoaking Flax, as well as Cedars, and burning, ſhining

ſhining Lights: Weaklings are peculiarly entitled to our Lord's care, and God deſpiſes not the Day of ſmall things; ſhall Man then? Shall he that ſtands in ſo much need of Mercy, as the beſt do, be ſevere? Let it be remember'd; to the Merciful, God will ſhew himſelf Merciful, *&c.* All muſt allow there is a time when Grace is low and weak, ſcarce diſcernible; and is it not torment enough to a ſincere Soul, to find it ſelf ſo Weak, its State diſputable, but new Burthens muſt be impos'd to preſs it lower? Shall the Phyſician turn Executioner? Is there not an Hour of Darkneſs, Temptation, Conflict, when Devils and Corruption are let looſe? And muſt a poor Soul, now ready to ſink with its own weight, have new ones hung about it? while he ſees flaws in his beſt Duties and Services, ſomewhat to provoke, and nothing to atone, and holineſs, to the grief of his Heart, advance but ſlowly. The compaſſionate Jeſus threatens very ſeverely ſuch as offend his little ones; and tho' the menace ſeem diſcharg'd againſt wicked Men, yet if good Men tranſgreſs in this kind, by needleſs Severities, God may repay them in their own Coin: Let ſuch as value their own Peace and others, be cautious.

'Tis the operative Faith that is juſtifying, and the more it abounds in good Works, the clearer are our hopes. The Promiſes run to Faith and Obedience, as the Veins and Arteries do over the whole Body; and as Spirits, Life and Vigor, are maintain'd there, by due Circulation; ſo is

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it in the Soul and ſpiritual Life; the reciprocal actings of Faith and Obedience, breed a ſtrong athletick Chriſtian, full of Peace and Activity: But as a Sick or Weak Man, is ſtill a Man and alive; ſo is a feeble Saint, a real Saint, tho' under infirmities, and he ought to have the Comfort of it; and ſince with great difficulty he takes it, let all be cautious how they hinder him.

As few enjoy the bleſſed aſſurance of God's Love, ſo ſuch as have it, have it not always, nor alike at all times, as Biſhop *Hopkins* well obſerves. Ebbs and flows will happen, Clouds and Sun-ſhine will variably overſpread the Soul, as they do the Face of the Heavens. 'Tis a mighty Favour when God ſpeaks Peace to a guilty Soul; but how does the Obligation redouble its force to gratitude and all ſuitable expreſſions, when he ſays to the Soul but once in this Life; *I am thy Salvation, thy exceeding great Reward*? ſealing it up to the Day of Redemption; God's Spirit witneſſing with it, that it is his.

Bp. Pearſon *on the Creed, p.* 369, *and* 370.

" That Love naturally follows a ſenſe of " forgiveneſs of Sins, appears by the Pa- " rable *Luk.* 6. 41, 42. upon which caſe " our Saviour made this queſtion, *Which* " *of them would love him moſt?* He ſup- " poſeth both the Debtors will love him, " becauſe the Creditor forgave them both; " and he collecteth the degrees of " Love will anſwer proportionably to " the quantity of the Debt forgiven.

What

What excites our Love to God, quickens our Obedience and Zeal in doing and ſuffering for him, and what does it more, than the ſenſe of his, manifeſted to our Souls? All therefore to whom God's Glory and Mens Welfare are endear'd, ſhou'd be cautious how they promote any diſcouragements obſtructive of ſuch noble Enterpriſes. 'Tis not warrantable to vacate or enervate any Doctrine, becauſe it has been abuſed ſometimes to ill purpoſes, upon which very deplorable effects have follow'd, while ſufficient guard might be provided againſt the abuſe of it by any honeſt Heart. Holy Souls are ſo concern'd for Purity, Mens Salvation, and God's Honor, that they look ſhie on any thing, which, thro' the prevalency of Mens Corruptions, ſeems to have the leaſt tendency to turn *the Grace of God into Wantonneſs*; but when they have done their beſt, they'll find it difficult, if not impoſſible, to ſet any thing out of the reach of Hypocrites, but they'll pretend to it, and labour to pervert it. What ſupports holy Souls in ſharp Conflicts in Life and Death, eſpecially when violent and torturing, but theſe Bleſſed Foretaſts and Aſſurances? Can we think that nothing, or ſmall, which has prov'd ſuch a mighty ſtay to the Spirits of ſo many excellent Perſons in their darkeſt Minutes, whom, in the Judgment of Charity, we can't but think are gone to their Eternal Reſt? Let us take heed leaſt our ſlighty Opinions provoke God to leave us deſtitute of thoſe vaſt Favours, which a

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ſerious Hour may make us value at another rate.

As neglect of any of God's Favours may prejudice our Comforts, ſo truſting to the beſt things he has not bid us, may prove very dangerous. Holineſs and good Works are excellent things; the one muſt be very amiable in God's Sight, as he can't but love and delight in his own likeneſs; and the other muſt be very acceptable to him, as they are agreeable to his Will and Commands: But when once they become the Objects of our Truſt and Confidence, and we begin to Pride our ſelves in them, as the matter of our dependance, to recommend us to the Divine acceptance, we ought to grow jealous of our ſelves, leaſt we truſt to a broken Reed. God will be honor'd in ways of his own appointment: His Will is the meaſure of Perfection; whatever ſemblances therefore of Goodneſs appear in things to our views, nay, tho' they really are ſo in their very nature, and ſome of the beſt too; yet if we neglect to obſerve his determinations, or oppoſe his Pleaſure reveal'd to us, he'll look upon us as bold Invaders of his rightful Prerogative, and what we do, as the reſult of ſelf-will, and treat us accordingly. God, by the univerſal Tenor of his holy Goſpel, ſeems moſtly bent upon honoring the riches and freedom of his Grace and Mercy, and the Merits and Satisfaction of his Bleſſed Son in our Salvation. If we miſs his deſign here, we fail in a great Point.

" God's deſign in the Covenant of Grace, *Dr.* Sibb's
" is to exalt the Riches of his Mercy, a- *Preface to the*
" bove all Sin and unworthineſs of Men; *Soul's conflict.*
" and we yeild him more Glory by Be-
" lieving, than it would be to his Ju-
" ſtice to deſtroy us. If we were Per-
" fect in our ſelves, we ſhould not Ho-
" nor him ſo much as when we labour to
" be found in Chriſt, having his Righte-
" ouſneſs upon us. Some who have laugh'd at their Fellow-Travellers cautious Preparations for foul weather in Sun-ſhine, have been convinc'd of their Prudence when they ſaw the Storm coming. Many abounding in the ſenſe of the ſufficiency of their own Righteouſneſs, who in Health and Proſperity ridicul'd ſuch as made better preparations, have yet, at the decline of the Day, when they ſaw the Clouds gathering, acknowledg'd their miſtake, and taken Sanctuary in the very thing they befool'd. Believe it, Death and Judgment will be found ſolemn Things, and trying Seaſons; when Eternity ſhall face us, and we begin to interfere with the ſtrange world of Spirits, and approach his enlighten'd Tribunal, whoſe Eyes are as a Flame of Fire, and can't behold the leaſt impurity: then it's poſſible our Stomachs may come down, and we be contented to accept of what will fully cover our Blemiſhes and Nakedneſs, and skreen us from the exquiſite ſearches of infinite Purity. Then perhaps with the ſtiff Cardinal, who living contended ſo much for dependance on good works, we may be perſwaded to accept

cept of what his Confeſſion dying declar'd to be *Tutiſſimum*, moſt ſafe to truſt to Chriſt alone.

Look back to the End of the beſt Men, and obſerve ſtrictly and impartially what they moſt repos'd their confidence in, in their dying Agonies, and you'll find it was Jeſus Chriſt only. Perſons on the confines of both Worlds, uſually make the trueſt eſtimates of things; and remember with great ſerioufneſs, that ſhortly the experiment muſt be your own; think now cloſely, what may be the ſureſt center of your Repoſe: Expect an awaken'd Conſcience to be more ſevere in its ſcrutiny, and Satan ready to back it with Fury, as his laſt onſet for the Maſtery: Conſider well what is moſt likely to bear the Teſt then, and ſupport under that rude ſhock, the laſt and fierceſt Aſſault of the Powers of Darkneſs: Know no Man can ſuffer for the Exerciſe of his Humility, but may for his Preſumption: Truſt the weight of Eternity, upon what you may moſt ſafely: Remember, if there be any worth in your good *Works, the beſt of which are full of flaws, you ſhall not loſe one grain in the repute of a juſt God, for modeſtly declining them: Count all therefore with the holy Apoſtle, *but as droſs and dung that you may be found in Chriſt*, &c. In the interim know, that to abound in works of Piety and Charity, and yet renounce Self-righteouſneſs, is truer, harder Self-denial, than all the Auſterities of Monkery.

* *What have we to boaſt of, when all the Righteouſneſs of our Works is none of ours, but Chriſt's imputed to us; whereby only, and not for any Merit in themſelves, they become acceptable, and have promiſe of Reward?* Mede *Diſc.* 39. *p.* 215.

ry. The judicious *Hooker* in his Diſcourſe of Juſtification, tells us: "There are two "kinds of Chriſtian Righteouſneſs; the "one without us, which we have by im- "putation; the other in us, which con- "ſiſts of Faith, Hope and Charity, and o- "ther Chriſtian Virtues. The little Fruit "we have in Holineſs, it is, God knows, "corrupt and unſound: We put no con- "fidence at all in it, we challenge no- "thing in the World for it. Cut off all "thoſe things wherein we have regard- "ed our own glory, thoſe things Men do "to pleaſe Men, and to ſatisfie their own "liking, thoſe things we do for any by "reſpect, not ſincerely and purely for "the Love of God; and a ſmall ſcore will "ſerve for the number of our righteous "deeds. Let ſuch as repute this Doctrine ſo very ridiculous, conſult fairly a Book entitled, *Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt alone*; and they'll find there is more than they are readily aware of to be ſaid, even for the *Rationale* of the thing, which moſt of all diſguſts them.

Eccleſ. Polit. p. 520. p. 514. p. 515.

Staynoe.

'Tis a mighty ſupport to a Chriſtian under his Conflicts, Temptations, Infirmities, and ſubſequent doubts and fears, to reflect with hope upon the ſoundneſs of his Converſion. I need not mention the many bleſſed encouragements God's holy Word gives him: Any who are converſant therein, know how to apply the Conſolation it affords on this occaſion: And ſuch as neglect it, or ſuperficially ſtudy it, deſerve that darkneſs which muſt neceſſarily

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ſarily hang upon their Minds, and that fear and perplexity, which is its juſt conſequence and recompence. I know ſomething of the Arguments bandy'd to and fro on this Subject, and how the Learned World is ſtill divided about it. But after all, I muſt own, I conceive a humble encouraging hope in God's mighty Grace and Mercy from this very conſideration, under all my doubts and fears, which my many infirmities naturally ſuggeſt to me; ſince while they are heartily bewail'd, and faithfully ſtrove againſt, I may depend upon God's acceptance, who is pleas'd with ſuch as hope in his Mercy, and dare truſt to his Promiſes in the way of Duty, even while hard beſet with difficulties: This is a proper ſeaſon for the vigorous exerciſe of Faith, which is infinitely pleaſing to God; to ſee us reſolutely combat all oppoſition, and hope, as it were, againſt hope; and tho' he ſhou'd ſlay us, yet ſtill to put our truſt in him: As ſure as God is true, ſuch Souls ſhall ne'er finally be aſhamed nor confounded. Let ſuch as value the Judgment of Great and Learned Men, conſult at leiſure the judicious *Hooker* and Dr. *Lightfoot*, what they ſay in this great Point of Perſeverance: Which the firſt of them calls a queſtion of Moment, and ſays, "the repoſe "of infinite Souls depends upon it; the "matter is weighty, dear, and pretious. If it be as natural (as I think it is) for a New-Born Child of Grace, to call upon God in Prayer, as 'tis for the New-Born Infant to cry: then what the Learned

Eccleſ. Polit. p. 552. Lightf. *p.* 1150. *Vol.* 2.

Dr.

Dr. *Cudworth* ſays in his excellent Diſcourſe, is very comfortable and encouraging to an upright Soul. Theſe excellent Perſons give us all reaſonable hopes we can deſire; and can an honeſt Heart ask more? They liv'd what they taught, and none more cry'd up Purity, Watchfulneſs, and Caution. As for the inſincere, let them patch up their hopes with what falſe Peace and Comforts they can get, which may laſt for a time; but let them reſt aſſured the Day is coming, they ſhall paſs away as a Snail which melteth. But let not any humble honeſt Heart diſquiet it ſelf by needleſs doubts and ſcruples it's but too ready to entertain: Its very concern leaſt it ſhou'd be inſincere affords it the Comfort, that it earneſtly affects ſincerity, and is a good Proof it is ſo far really poſſeſt of it, as the degrees of its deſires advance; at the leaſt are a bleſſed earneſt of it. 'Tis the fearleſs and the careleſs, the ſecure and confident, that are in greateſt danger; who are ever boaſting of their Attainments, ſoaring aloft in their Altitudes, bragging how they live in the Circle of Light and Comfort continually, without a Sigh or Groan, or any depreſſion of Spirit, or viſible expreſſion of Humility, or complaint againſt Corruptions; who are big of a Tympany, bloated with Pride and Conceit, and deſpiſe their weak Brethren, looking upon them with diſdain, as grovelling Earth-Worms that can't aſpire upward, reputing themſelves the only Proficients. I wiſh ſuch would remember

Serm. 1. *from p.* 137, *to p.* 143.

that a great Apoſtle exhorts us to be cloth'd with Humility: *For God reſiſteth the Proud, and gives Grace to the Humble.* 1 Pet. 5. 5.

Princes maintain their Sovereignty, and have their *Arcana Imperii*, and grow jealous and diſpleas'd with ſuch as queſtion the one, or that preſume to dive into the other. Who then can ſafely meddle with the Prerogative of an infinite Majeſty; or pry into his ſecret Decrees; or ſay he has none? Sure it's condeſcenſion enough, that he has told us our Names are in the Book of Life, if his Laws are written in our Hearts, and copied out in our Lives, tendring his Word and Spirit to effect it, if we will but ſincerely ask and improve the means, and not wilfully Regiſter our Names in the black Records of Hell. What do we get by glaring on the Sun, but Blindneſs? by looking down into great Deeps, but giddineſs and inſtabillity? Our Duty is plain, and God is more willing to ſave us, than we are to be ſaved; which he demonſtrates by bringing the terms as low as poſſible, even to ſincere deſires, which naturally expreſs themſelves in congruous efforts. Do we think to be ſaved againſt our Wills? and made happy againſt our Inclinations? What is Heaven, but the fruition of the ever Bleſſed God? And is that poſſible, till our Wills and Affections embrace him? Let us have done then with all bold concluſions about the great Jehovah and his Operations, and take heed how we peep within the Curtains of his purpoſes,

And how very idle that Men ſhou'd fall out about what none of them underſtand? Bonnell's *Life, p.* 177.

purpoſes, leſt we be overwhelm'd with Majeſty, and increate Light break out upon us, and at once dazzle and confound us. Did we ſtudy to know our ſelves better, we ſhou'd him, to the greateſt advantage; this wou'd teach us to keep our diſtance, and ply our Duty, and nothing more capacitates us for Heavens Secrets. Humility and Obedience enlarge the Soul to be the more ſuſceptive of divine Favours. Low Grounds and Valleys partake moſt liberally of Heaven's Dews and Bleſſings, while lofty Mountains remain dry and barren.

After all, if we can't agree upon ſome abſtruſer Points, nor reconcile ſome places of Scripture ſo as perfectly to acquieſce in ſome diſputable Opinions, yet let us in what's eaſy and plain, which may afford us great ſatisfaction, tho' not ſo full, it may be, as we cou'd wiſh. The ſenſe that divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs thinks fit to leave us ſomewhat in the Dark in ſome Caſes, ſhou'd make us more inquiſitive what may be his Deſign in it, than too nicely to diſcuſs Points his Providence ſeems to draw a Vail over. This wou'd inſtruct us in the great Leſſons of Humility, Charity, Patience and Forbearance: Vaſt wou'd be our acquiſitions this way, and we ſhou'd find our ſelves in the trueſt way to Heaven by theſe Exerciſes, and God in due time revealing all ſaving knowledge to us; and what can we deſire more? And this we may depend upon,

Pſal. 25. 9. ſince God has promiſed to *guide the Meek and teach them his way.* But Pride and Contention uſually go together, and naturally raiſe a duſt, which conceals Truth, and God often judicially puniſhes one Error with another. He has made practical Truths ſo plain, that nothing but affected ignorance can keep them from our views; and if we ſuffer our Paſſions to force us over theſe obligations, can we think he will Reward our diſobedience with true Knowledge?

Wou'd we finally perſevere, and be aſſur'd of our Salvation, let us vigorouſly purſue the Method the Apoſtle preſcribes, and ne'er doubt of a full attainment? (2 *Pet.* chap. 1. v. 5, to the end of the 12th.) Wou'd we endeavour to live as holily as if we expected to be juſtifi'd by our own Works, then think and ſay, as we indeed really are, and the Scriptures teach us, af-

Luk. 17. 10. ter all, *but unprofitable Servants*? putting our ſole confidence in Jeſus Chriſt, we need not doubt of God's acceptance. Wou'd we know whether we are of that Bleſſed number for whom our deareſt Lord is gone before to prepare Manſions of Glory? Let us follow the advice inſinuated by St. *Peter*, *viz.* to ſtudy and apply the exceeding *great*

2 Pet. 1. 4. *and pretious Promiſes* of the Goſpel, till we are made partakers of the Divine Nature, and then we need not queſtion our intereſt in them. Where Men are careleſs of theſe Apoſtolick Directions, it's a ſad ſign matters are not right with them, whatever they pretend. But would we

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ſincerely make theſe our great ſcope and end, and where we differ'd in any thing, ſtrive to maintain *fervent Charity*, which the Apoſtle recommends to us above all things, we ſhou'd ſoon feel the Bleſſings which attend this heavenly temper here, in a compoſure in part of our unhappy differences and diviſions; and what God ſuffer'd to remain to exerciſe our Graces, and excite our Grief, Prayers and endeavours to redreſs, we ſhou'd ſee at length iſſuing in his greater Glory, and our own Advantage. 1 Pet. 4. 8

Some account, I believe, might be given of the diſcrepance of Mens Opinions, from the variety of their Conſtitutions, courſes of Life, and of God's Providential dealings with them. Such as are moſt broken with legal terrors, after much Guilt and ſtrong Convictions, are moſt apt to admire the free, preventing Grace and Mercy of God, when he brings them to themſelves, and acquaintance with him. Such as have ſtrong Corruptions to grapple with, wonder moſt at his rich forbearance, and are moſt conſcious of their own inabilities. And ſuch as go with full Sail to Heaven, under a ſtrong and abiding ſenſe of God's Love, are moſt taken up with admiring thoughts of their own unworthineſs, and the freedom of his Favours. On the other hand, ſuch as lead more Moral Lives, without any great awakenings of Conſcience, from a ſenſe of groſſer Guilt, are apter to be more ſelf-opiniative, and

truſt more to their own ſtrength and performances, and can't ſo readily own ſome favours of Heaven, it's poſſible they never taſted, and it may be, think they better deſerv'd than ſuch as pretend to them.

But after all, to our greater Humiliation, we are all too prone to miſlive the very Principles we eſpouſe. So much corruption as remains in the beſt, ſo much aptitude is there to offend our glorious Maſter, let our Opinions be what they will: A conſideration very uſeful and inſtructive, were it attended to as it ſhou'd, to make us leſs affect the Study of thorny Controverſies, dry Notions and Speculations, and more the great Duty of Mortification, where we are ſure to find our Earnings. Whether we make God or our ſelves moſt our dependance, we are ſtill ready to fall into great failures when we come to action.

If we ſay we can do nothing without God's Grace, why don't we take the advice of the Holy-Ghoſt? *To work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling: For it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good Pleaſure.* If we think all ſo much in our own Power, why don't we abound more in good Works? Don't our doing ſo little, upbraid our own conceſſions? How prone are we abſolutely to appropriate that to him or our ſelves, which he expreſly tells us is ſome way a ſocial Work? *What God joins together, let no Man put aſunder.* I'm afraid, nay, I think

Phil. 2. 12, 13.

think I may be confident, that the beſt Man breathing, every Day, more or leſs, in ſome degree, abuſes his avow'd Principles, let his dependance be where it will. Why elſe does he not pray and live better? As I'm confident he wou'd, were he ſure this Day was his laſt. Let us then affect Modeſty, Moderation and Charity, as we hope for Mercy at the Hands of God.

Men may talk as big as they pleaſe of the powers of Nature, yet Scripture and ſad Experience evidence it to be very dark and perverſe, while unaſſiſted by divine Grace. 'Tis God's holy Spirit that brings the Soul out of that Chaos of ignorance and confuſion it uaturally lies in: He begins, carries on, and finiſhes the great Work of our ſpiritual Renovation. He rolls away the Miſts of Darkneſs from our Underſtandings, and keeps them from returning, which otherwiſe recur as naturally as Miſts do in the Air in which we breath: He bends the Iron ſinew of the Will, and prevents it from returning to the natural and habitual poſture it once had, when ſet upon miſchief, and departure from God: He refines our earthly Affections, and keeps them aloft, which have as natural a tendency to this World, as a Clod caſt into the Air has to the Earth its Centre. In few Words, he is the ſecret Magnetiſm of Heaven, that draws us upwards, and not the ſpring of our own activity, which moves us to-

wards God, as a Watch moves without its Maſter-Spring.

But ſtill all muſt, and do agree, that Men act not like Puppets only when they are mov'd, but have ſpritely Powers for Action, tho' much perverted by ill cuſtoms. As depraved as we are, we naturally deſire happineſs, tho' we miſtake the way to it. A meer natural Man can deſcry the Charms of Moral Virtue, admire and effect it, as many Heathens have; but without a peculiar divine aſſiſtance he can't come up to that purity of Heart and Sanctity of Life, from a right Principle and to a right End God requires, and that quallifies for Communion with him and fruition of him. But a true Chriſtian has an infus'd Principle that capacitates him for higher attainments, and is therefore bid to ſtir up the Gifts and Graces beſtow'd upon him; *to grow in Grace, and crucifie the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts.* Wou'd infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs put a Creature upon impracticable Duties, and command impoſſibilities? Let us not deceive our ſelves, and charge God fooliſhly; he is no hard Maſter, to reap where he has not ſow'd. Does he liſten to the Cries of natural inſtinct, and feed the *Ravens* when they cry for Hunger? And do we think he wont hear the Prayer of his Children? If we wont allow God has oblig'd himſelf by Promiſe to anſwer the Prayer of a natural Man, which ſome Texts ſeem to favour; yet the Love of God, which is his Nature, encourages us to hope he will,

as well as ſome Precedents of his Grace and Favour: however, we are ſure the Promiſe runs full and ſtrong to the faithful in Covenant with him: *Ask, and ye ſhall receive: To him that has* and improves, *more ſhall be given.* The beſt muſt own they might do more good than they do, and the worſt that they might avoid much Sin they do not: A thought that ſhou'd make us adore the Divine Mercy, and hate our baſe, ſinful ſelves. No Doctrines are to be admitted that caſt the leaſt Reflexion on the Divine Perfections or Proceedures: Whoever are ſav'd, ſhall acknowledge Eternal Life to be the Gift of God; and whoever are loſt, ſhall own Eternal Death to be the juſt Wages of their Sin: Men periſh not ſo much for want of means, but for contempt or neglect of what they have. However Men load one another's Opinions, and too often even the ever Bleſſed God, with ſtrange inviduous conſequences, yet the Day is coming which will clear up his Mercy, Juſtice, Truth and Faithfulneſs, as the Light at Noon-day, and leave all Men inexcuſable.

How happy had it been for ſome Men, had they ſpent that time in living, they ſpent in needleſs diſputing: Let us be warn'd by their Miſcarriages, be up and doing, and we ſhall feel God gracious, and know that which all our vain jangling would ne'er make us underſtand: Experience will afford ſuch an Idea of divine Truths, that all our airy Notions cou'd not give

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us ſo much as the ſemblance of; while we really feel our ſelves wafted apace towards the Shoar of Eternal Bliſs, we ſhall find our Souls poſſeſt already of ſome part of it.

Holy Souls of very different Sentiments on Earth, I'm ſatisfi'd, are now warbling their Hallelujahs about the Throne of the All-glorious Jeſus, with continual Harmony. 'Tis pity they agreed not better here, tho' in the main, no doubt, they did, who are all as one there. Wou'd the State of Heaven admit of ſhame and concern, ſome there, it's poſſible, wou'd be put to the Bluſh for theſe their leſſer Follies here on Earth, as conſcious they ſought too much themſelves and Humours in them, and too little the Glory of God, which now appears to them to be the great All in all. Let us think ſo frequently and ſeriouſly of that Bleſſed State of perfect Unity above, and the danger we are in from the common Enemy here, whoſe main Stratagem is to divide, the more eaſily to deſtroy; till we cultivate a more healing Spirit, which uniting us one to another by the Exerciſe of Charity, may diſpoſe us for cloſer Union with God, ſo enable us to break the ſtrong Legions of Hell, our great and common Intereſt.

Where we differ, let us with the ſame freedom give that liberty to others we take our ſelves. It neither comports with Gentility, Ingenuity, nor Chriſtianity, to be hide-bound in this matter: It looks little, and betokens a narrow contracted Spi-

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rit: It makes a Man appear arrogant and aſſuming: Vice degrades the Soul, but eſpecially Pride and Conceit. God diſpenſes his Gifts variouſly, and Nature ſports her ſelf in a grateful variety: Men are of different Tempers and Inclinations, and receive different Educations and infuſions of Principles: God very variouſly caſts their Lot, and treats them not alike in his Providence: Some conſult their Reaſon moſt, others their Experience: Theſe and many other circumſtances occaſion them to form very different Judgments of things ſuitable to their impreſſions; and we muſt allow them to obey their Convictions, and be govern'd by Conſcience, ſince *what is not of Faith, is Sin*; and God may have wiſe Ends to bring to paſs by this very Method, what we can't dive into, nor ſo much as imagine: I ſpeak ſtill of leſſer differences. If we will approve our ſelves then to be real Chriſtians, let us not think our ſelves left at liberty in this point, but oblig'd by the indiſpenſible Law of Charity: Let not a difference in Perſwaſion alienate or abate Affection; a Man of common candour muſt be aſham'd of it in cool Thoughts.

Above all, let us beware of any Principles that ſtrike at the Vitals of Religion, that oppoſe purity of Heart, and holineſs of Life, the grand deſign of the Goſpel. Some have diſcours'd as tho' they had ne'er read or underſtood the Scriptures, or rather, as if their great deſign in reading them, had been to pervert them. Let

us keep to the Form of ſound Words, and as we love God and our Souls, let us avoid all expreſſions that but border on Blaſphemy or Prophanity, or have but the leaſt ſhadow or ſemblance of them: Let us away with the vain pretences of good meanings in them, while they ſmell ſo ſtrong of Affectation and Singularity, and bring many ignorant People into ſtrange Miſconceits, and dangerous Errors and miſtakes.

May the Doctrines of Free-Grace be urg'd with a ſtrict guard and due caution, and what any way oppoſes or enervates them, with a tender regard to weak and doubting Chriſtians: The preſent Peace and eternal Welfare of many Souls lies at ſtake: A conſideration which ſhou'd conjure all to great Care and Tenderneſs, to lay aſide the force of Prejudices from Party, Education, and private Paſſions. He that ſtudies, and upon good grounds can apply the Promiſes of the Goſpel to himſelf, will yet find need to urge his Heart to meditate Terror ſometimes, and rejoice with trembling. God threatens Hell to drive us to Heaven: Nothing he preſcribes us ſhall be in vain, if we don't neglect or pervert his gracious deſign in it: Hopes and Fears are the Soul's Sinews for action, and a great part of Chriſtian skill conſiſts in an alternative application of ſuitable Objects at proper Seaſons. The Honey-comb may be pleaſing to Nature, but too great Indulgences may prove injurious, and breed a Surfeit: Variety, we ſay, makes

makes a Feaſt: Sweets and Acids are as agreeable to the Appetite interchangably, and no Man cares to make a Meal only of Sauce. Let Nature then inſtruct us in the right uſe of the Methods of divine Grace, and reconcile us to God's ſeverer Methods in ſome State of our Souls, as a part of that kind diſpenſation. His Providence allots us Proſperity and Adverſity very variouſly; our Souls and Bodies need Purgatives, as well as Reſtoratives, and we find the advantages of Health, more than recompencing the bitterneſs of a Potion, or the uneaſineſs of its Operation.

Such as decry ſerious awakening Diſcourſes, as legal Preaching; and ſtop their own and others Ears againſt the Threats and Terrors of the Law, admitting of no ſearching, trying Truths, but the pleaſant ſound of the Promiſes; that cry up the power and freedom of Divine Grace, and pardoning Mercy, the Excellency and All-ſufficiency of the Mediator's Righteouſneſs, to the detriment or neglect of Induſtry, Holineſs, and good Works, will, I fear, have a ſad account to make one day, whatever they pretend now. He that knows not his Diſeaſe and danger, will ne'er heartily ſeek or value a Remedy: The Law is as true a Glaſs to ſhew us our Spots, deformity and miſery, as the Goſpel is our ſure guide to the only Remedy. Is it a ſmall privilege to receive the Divine Image, to partake of qualifications, that fit us for the Viſion of the ever Bleſſed God, and eternal happineſs? To abound

bound in the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which will turn to our everlaſting account, and have an abundant recompence of Reward? Don't Chriſt and his Apoſtles urge us to aſpire towards Perfection? *To be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*; *to perfect Holineſs in God's fear*? And can we think our ſelves ſincere, if we don't aim and endeavour after it, tho' we can't abſolutely attain it here? What does our glorious Lord inculcate more, in ſome of his laſt dying Words, than Prayer, Obedience, *and bringing forth of much fruit*? The laſt of which, he makes the very Livery of his Diſciples: And can we expect the Benefit of his bleſſed Prayer that follows, without theſe Marks of our diſcipleſhip? O what a heavenly treaſure of Inſtruction do thoſe four Chapters compriſe! What divine Conſolations do they Breath! How infinitely indebted are we to the Lord of Life and Glory, for his Prayer on Earth, and Interceſſion in Heaven! Methinks we ſhould delight to dwell upon them, while we have Hearts to conceive, admire, love and praiſe him.

John 14, 15, 16, 17.

Wo be to that Man one day, that dares turn the Grace of God into Wantonneſs, and ſin becauſe it abounds: that hardens his Heart becauſe God *waits to be gracious*; how will his Fury ſmoke againſt him that *deſpiſes the treaſures of his Goodneſs and his Patience*, that runs into *longſufferance*? How will it reſt upon him, *that after his impenitent Heart*, thus *treaſures up Wrath againſt*

gainſt the Day of Wrath? Men may ſoften matters to themſelves and others, and cover all with plauſible pretexts, which one Day will drop like Leaves in Autumn. *Behold! all you that kindle a Fire, that compaſs yourſelves about with Sparks: Walk in the Light of your Fire, and in the Sparks you have kindled. This ſhall you have of mine Hand,* ſays God by the Prophet, *you ſhall lie down in Sorrow.* Let us not ſport our ſelves in our own deceivings, nor promiſe our ſelves Peace, *while we walk in the imagination of our Hearts.* God forgive us our offences of this kind, and keep us from this horrid abuſe of his Mercy. Iſai. 50. 11.

It's poſſible I may incur the fate of ſuch as attempt to part Men in a Fray, to pleaſe none, but get blows from all; but if truth be on my ſide, with ſincere intentions for God's Glory, I'm ſure to pleaſe him, which will afford me the higheſt ſatisfaction. Some may repute this a needleſs digreſſion, very improper to mingle with the preſent ſubject: If ſuch pleaſe to look back, they'll find theſe things fell in my way: But had the matter been otherwiſe; Gratitude wou'd make that natural, which Order might ſeem to forbid. *The Ox knows his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſter's Crib.* I had been more brutiſh than either, had I not ſaid the little I have in Honor of the free Grace of God, to which I'm ſo infinitely beholden. Charming is Truth to an enlighten'd Mind, but ortho-

orthodoxy it ſelf will do us little Service, without a ſuitable Practice; an ill Life is one of the greateſt Errors, as it's oppoſite to ſincerity of Heart, which is our Evangelick Perfection. "For miſappre-
"henſion, God doth grant allowance,
"and diſpenſes with humane frailties;
"but for failing of Intention, there is
"no diſpenſation. Fail here, and you
"are Hypocrites; and therefore upright-
"neſs is our Perfection: He is upright
"that means well, tho' he be in many
"things miſtaken, and incumber'd with
"weakneſs. Therefore it becomes us to be
"highly Charitable one towards another,
"ſince God is ſo gracious, and ſets ſuch a
"value upon our good meanings and
"ſincere intentions, as to account of this
"for Righteouſneſs, either in Practice or
"Opinion.

Dr. Whitchcot, *Vol.* 1. *Diſc.* 4.

To love one becauſe he is of our Way and Opinion, is like loving a Man's Dreſs, more than his Perſon, and expreſſes the trueſt love of our Selves and Humors; as ſure as loving a pious Man differing in judgment from us in ſome things, is a lively expreſſion of our Love to goodneſs, and therein of our Love to God. And who but an errant Bigott cou'd content himſelf with any thing ſhort of this comfortable ſymptom of his ſincerity? *If we give our Bodies to be burnt, and have not Charity, it profits us not*: Our beſt deeds without it, will prove but the Varniſh of Hypocriſie, which when the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhall melt down by the brightneſs of his

his coming, will but render our natural complexion the more ugly and hateful. Let us all then ſtrive to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; to be of the ſame Mind; and where we are ſo unhappy as to differ, ſtill let us *love as Brethren*, and be ſure that affection which unites us to God, unites us to one another.

" ALmighty God, who ſeeſt that we
" have no power of our ſelves, to
" help our ſelves, we humbly beſeech
" Thee, that as by thy ſpecial Grace pre-
" venting us, Thou doſt put into our
" Minds good deſires, ſo by thy conti-
" nual help we may bring the ſame to
" good effect. And becauſe the frailty of
" Man without Thee cannot but fall, keep
" us ever by Thy help, from all things
" hurtful, and lead us to all things pro-
" fitable to our Salvation; and grant us
" ſo to be join'd together in Unity of
" Spirit, that we may be made a holy
" Temple, acceptable to Thee, through
" *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord, who liveth and
" reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghoſt,
" one God World without end. *Amen.*

The Strength and Skill of a Chriſtian, lies very much in the avoiding carefully the Occaſions and firſt Beginnings of Temptation. Grace in the Habit may fall aſleep without Care and Exerciſe; The weak Saint ſtands his ground when upon his Guard, while the mighty one falls under

der a fit of ſecurity and preſumption: This difference appears ſometimes in the ſame Perſon, at different Seaſons, as in the Caſe of St. *Peter*; while under the Power of Self confidence, who ſpake bigger, and promiſed fairer, and fell more ſhamefully? And after his fall had awaken'd his Caution and rouz'd up his Courage, who more bold and brave, who more ſtanch and reſolute? He that trembled at the Voice of a Damſel, maintains his Maſter's Cauſe undauntedly in the Face of his powerful Murtherers. *Job* made a Covenant with his Eyes, and ſo preſerv'd his Purity, while the Man after God's own Heart letting his rove at all adventures, fell into Adultery and Murther, wilfully and deliberately.

There's no greater Wiſdom than well to time the beginning of things. Dangers are no more light, if they once ſeem ſo; and more dangers have deceived Men than forc'd them. Lord Verul. Eſſays, p. 78.

How apt are we to think our Work is done when it's but begun? How ready to ſit down and enjoy the Fruits of our firſt Succeſſes, till we find the Enemy has rally'd, and returns to a freſh Encounter? When we have conquer'd great Dangers, we are prone to deſpiſe leſſer; but the Moment we do ſo, they are no longer ſuch to us; for ſecurity will ſoon alter their Property. Great difficulties don't prejudice us ſo much, when we are upon our guard, as little ones that ſurprize us: They gradually gather ſtrength, and ſteal upon us without obſervation, till they ſuddenly overwhelm us. *There is a Reſt remaining for the People of God*; but they'll be miſtaken if they expect it here: They muſt ſtand ready for the Combat while they

they are on this Stage of Temptations; When they have conquer'd one, *Hydra* like, another ſprings up: O what need have we then of Patience, as well as Vigilance, while Corruptions and Temptations are continually teizing and worrying us, that having done all, we may ſtand? Patience ſeems the greater part of fortitude: A Man may bear bravely great Torture for a while, that may ſink under far leſs of long continuance: Yet this long Trial is often the State of a Chriſtian, to whom ſtrong Corruptions are more terrible than Death, it being like chaining the Living to the Dead, and length ſtill adds ſtrength. 'Tis highly uſeful to train our ſelves to Diſcipline and Self-denial in leſſer matters, that with more facility we may handle our Weapons on greater Occaſions. The Maſtery of the Will, is the great thing in Converſion; and the more we ſubdue it, the nearer we advance to perfection. Incredible will be the advantage if we keep a ſtrict Hand upon it, in lawful and indifferent matters. I urge this the more, from a ſenſe of the ill conſequences of my own failures in this kind. And I beſeech Almighty God to humble, pardon and help me under theſe defects, that after the receipt of ſuch mighty Favours, I ſhou'd exert no more gratitude: With ſhame do I acknowledge it to the glory of his Patience and rich forbearance.

Perfection certainly we ſhould all drive at, and be groaning againſt the ſad remains of this Body of Sin and Death, crying with the Apoſtle, *O wretched Men that* we are, *who ſhall deliver us?* and for this end, may deſire *to be diſſolv'd and be with Chriſt, which is far better*; not only as it's a State of Glory, but of freedom from Sin. Exemption from Miſery, and the attainment of Happineſs, are the Voice of Nature; but delivery from Sin, and deſires after perfect Purity, are the proper Language of Grace. Scripture and Experience declare there are no abſolute attainments of Perfection to be made here. 'Tis a State of Trial and Conflict, to exerciſe Faith and Patience, infinitely pleaſing to God. We are but too prone, God knows, to be proud of the poor proficiency we make, and ſhou'd we not have ſome dead Weight left, to depreſs and humble us, we ſhou'd be in danger of ſoaring into the Altitude of ſpiritual Pride, which wou'd fill us with elated apprehenſions of our ſelves, and contempt of others. It can't, I think, be prov'd, that the bleſſed Spirit of God ſubdues corruption abſolutely and entirely in any, in this Mortal State, but that the Leproſie does ſtill more or leſs cleave to the Walls of the Houſe while ſtanding.

Pride was the Sin of Devils, God moſt abhors: The Naturaliſt ſays, Corruption of the beſt things is the worſt; ſo may the Divine: When we grow Proud of Virtue, that baſe Vice, like the Philoſophers,

phers-Stone ſaid to tranſmute all into Gold it touches, tranſmutes all it mingles with into abominable Poiſon, and the beſt things into the worſt. Never was bleſſed *Job* more lovely in the Eye of Heaven, than when under the Exerciſe of his Humility and Patience, abhorring himſelf *in Duſt and Aſhes*. *What is Man*, ſays Eliphaz, *that he ſhou'd be clean? and he which is Born of a Woman, that he ſhou'd be Righteous? Behold he puts no truſt in his Saints, yea the Heavens are not clean in his ſight. How much more abominable and filthy is Man, which drinketh iniquity like Water? Behold he puts no truſt in his Servants*; *and his Angels he chargeth with Folly*. The top and quinteſſence of Nature, even Angelick purity, loſes its luſtre when compar'd with what's infinite and increate. Therefore ſays *Job* himſelf, *Tho' I were Righteous, yet wou'd I not anſwer, but I wou'd make ſupplication to my Judge. If I juſtifie my ſelf, my own Mouth ſhall condemn me: If I ſay, I am Perfect, it ſhall alſo prove me perverſe. Tho' I were Perfect, yet wou'd I not know my Soul: I wou'd deſpiſe my Life*. Theſe are ſome of the Rhetorical expreſſions of *Job* and his Friend on this Subject, which teach us glorious Truths, and the profoundeſt Reverence and Reſpect to the moſt Holy God, even to a real contempt, and as it were a nullifying of our mean, ſinful ſelves.

Job 15.

Job 4. 18.

Job 9.

Let not one Syllable here ſaid, be miſapplied, as inſinuating any thing to the prejudice of Holineſs, the beſt thing we

can aim at on this ſide Heaven, that ſo much glorifies God, and is one of the firſt rudiments of our bleſſedneſs and glory. No, in God's Name and Strength, let us ſtrive to outſtrip the ſanctity of *Job*, *Noah*, and *Daniel*; but then let us be ſure to keep our Humility: Let us deſire, pray and endeavour *to perfect Holineſs in God's fear*; but then let us ſtill remember God and our wretched Selves: How after all our refining, there's ſtill Droſs enough left for the Eye of his Purity to faſten upon, and devour us; that *if he ſhou'd be extream to mark what's amiſs, in his ſight no Fleſh living ſhou'd be juſtifi'd.* In ſhort, as he can ne'er be upright, who does not pant and aſpire after Perfection; ſo he that attains the higheſt pitch here, tho' abſolutely he can none, yet if he retain not his Humility, he can't hold his Integrity.

If we mourn over our Corruptions, hate them, and heartily pray and watch againſt them, they may trouble, but will not ruine us: They may be as Thorns in our Fleſh, to prick and pain us, like the *Canaanites*, not deſtroy'd all at once, but left to exerciſe our Humility and Dependance: So our Falls may prove our Riſe; our Weakneſs, our Strength; our Sorrows, finally our Joys. Not that there is any natural tendency in them to ſuch bleſſed effects; but it is perfectly owing to the admirable Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs of a gracious God, who can bring Good out of Evil, Light out of Darkneſs; out

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of our Weakneſs, greater Confuſion to our Enemies; and out of all, the Triumphs of his Glory, and our Happineſs, thro' the Might and Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, our Bleſſed Lord, to whom be Glory for ever.

Let us not then be diſcourag'd, but reſiſt Sin and Satan, tho' we get our ground by Inches. We are ne'er conquer'd till we throw down our Weapons; Heaven peculiarly Favours the Bold and Reſolute: Tho' by the fury of an onſet we be beaten from our Poſt, let us retire Fighting, and our retreat will be commendable, till we return with reinforcements to the Combat. *Above all, let us take the Shield of Faith*, by which Chriſtian Heroes in all Ages have done wonders; Armour of Proof againſt all the Legions of Hell and Earth, when they join Iſſue; he that has this, will ne'er be vanquiſh'd. This ſupplies the part of a Proſpective, whereby we ſee more for us, than againſt us; a ſight that animates the Soul to brave Encounters: As this thrives, every Grace does, and corruption languiſhes: By this we ſee our Help, and feel our Strength, even Chriſt our Advocate above in Glory, at the Right Hand of the Majeſty on high, with the Keys of Hell and Death in his Hand, who has all Power in Heaven and Earth. He dwells likewiſe in our Hearts by Faith, and is in us the hope of Glory, by the energy of his Holy Spirit: We do believe, Lord increaſe our Faith: By this we may look upon the remains of Corruption, not as the forerunner of a

Rout, but the Van of a glorious Victory.

And this indeed is the Root of my hopes; for I find ſtill many difficulties to grapple with, and fierce oppoſition; that I muſt have many a tug with a vain, wicked Heart, and the Prince of Darkneſs. I Pray, Read, and Fight, and yet am often beaten; my Comfort is, I don't quite leave the Field, but rally and return to the charge.

O my Soul, ſince thou art in ſo much danger, as there are Luſts remaining unmortifi'd, let it be thy daily care to crucifie them all, that the Body of Sin and Death may be daily dying: Let thy Peace and Hopes ne'er out-run the Execution of thy Luſts; their Death is the Life of thy Soul and all its bleſſed hopes. As thy Zeal againſt Sin flags, let no rotten Prop ſupport them; let them droop as they ought, that the want of them may rouze thee up to aſpire by all means to thy firſt Love and Works.

As Pride and Security advance, there muſt needs be a decline of all regular hopes and comforts: *God reſiſts the Proud*, and above all, ſpiritual Pride, moſt odious in his Sight. God often ſuffers his to tumble into the Dirt, tho' he let them not lie there, to humble them, when they begin to entertain over-weening thoughts of themſelves, and begin to ſettle on their Lees.

The wainings of Comfort, and the ſproutings of Corruptions, rouze, humble and quicken ſincere Souls, and often make them fear a declenſion, the high way to Apoſtacy. A true Chriſtian is ever a growing one, but not always alike, nor in the Exerciſe of the ſame Graces: Some may ſeem at a ſtand, while others thrive; but whoever grows in Humility, tho' he ſeem to grow downwards in other reſpects, has yet the trueſt growth in Grace: For this is like the Tap-Root of a Tree, that keeps it ſteady and firm in all Storms; and like the ſpreading of its Roots, whereby the Tree becomes more luxuriant and fruitful. A real declenſion manifeſts a defect of the vital Union, whatever ſemblances to the contrary appear: This manifeſtly brings a Man into hazard of being a withered Branch, whoſe fate is to be caſt into the Fire.

Union is the Foundation of Communion: This Chriſt intimates *John* 15. the withering Branch there is deſcrib'd to have ſome kind of Union, but it's defective; ſomething hinders the flow of the Sap and Spirit of the Vine from diſtilling into it: The true Branch is purg'd to greater fructification, which is made there the grand Characteriſtick of the true vital Union, the real ſaving abiding in Chriſt: To this abiding in him, is aſcrib'd the abiding of his Words in us; to which is ſubjoin'd a moſt glorious Promiſe of asking what we will, and it ſhall be done unto us, Verſe the 7th. We are told *Heb.* 3. 14.

3. 14. *We are made partakers of Chriſt if we hold the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt to the end.* As this evidenceth Perſeverance to be the ſureſt proof of our being in Chriſt, ſo as to partake of all his ſaving benefits; ſo our real Union with Chriſt, when the bright Symptoms of it appear, may afford us bleſſed grounds of hope that we ſhall hold out and perſevere unto the end: That becanſe *he lives, we ſhall live alſo. They that are Chriſts, have Crucifi'd the Fleſh, with its Affections and Luſts*, Gal. 5. 24. What ſhall we think then of ſuch, or what can they think of themſelves, who are neither under the power of Vivification nor Mortification? who tell us plainly, they are the People of God, who ſees no ſin in his. What a wretched fallacy do ſuch put upon themſelves? Feeling ſhortly will convince them of their egregious folly and ſtupidity. This is like the dreaming Whim of immortalizing Faith, ſome fondly ſuppoſe will fence againſt a natural Death, tho' better Believers than they that maintain the Hypotheſis, every day tumble into the Grave before their Faces. *Deut.* 32. 19. and *Pſal.* 106. 40. We are told, *when the Lord ſaw the Wickedneſs of his People, he abhorr'd his own inheritance.* Amos. 3. 2. Says the Lord to his People: *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth: therefore will I puniſh you for all your Iniquities.* God ſees Sin wherever it is, and hates it, but moſt of all in his own Children, whom he chaſtens, *that they might not be condemn'd*

with the World, 1 Cor. 11. 32. Whoever conſults the *Chapter* and *Pſalm* juſt cited, will ſee how quick-ſighted God is of the Sins of his, how his Wrath and Jealouſie ſmoak'd againſt them: And indeed, the whole Scripture proclaims Sorrows and Sufferings awaiting the beſt of Men, and all Ages have made it to appear real fact; and not only for Trial, but for their Sins. Good God! to what degeneracy is thy Creature obnoxious, who in the Face of thy Word, *&c.* can fall into ſuch infatuation!

Some ſay, God ne'er deſerts a Soul but for Sin; others again, that he does, for very great and glorious Purpoſes. 'Tis not our wiſdom to be poſitive of things dubious, nor to confine the Almighty, where he has left himſelf at liberty. The beſt have Sin enough to vindicate the Juſtice of a deſertion; and tho' God may in ſuch a Caſe have no particular quarrel againſt us, yet it may be profitable and ſafe for us, to lay it ever at the door of our Sin, as it may keep us humble, and prevent hard Thoughts of God. On the other hand, we ſee *Job* was deſerted for Trial only, as we may ſuppoſe many ſince, without any peculiar Controverſy more than ordinary, between God and ſuch Souls. *We have ſeen the end of the Lord, that he is very pitiful, and of tender Mercy; and that he bleſſes the latter end of ſuch more than their beginning*, Job 42. 12. Theſe deſertions, like miſty Mornings, have ended in a glori- Jam. 5. 11.

glorious Sun-ſhine of moſt radiant Grace and Comfort.

Let us then entirely give up our ſelves to divine Conduct in the way of Duty, who will ever repay our Faith and Patience with double intereſt; whoſe very Nature is goodneſs, and waits only the fitteſt ſeaſons to be communicative; who is readier to impart his beſt Gifts, than we to ask or receive them; who is readier to communicate his benign, reviving influences, to qualify'd Subjects, than the Sun appearing in his utmoſt Splendor is to diſpenſe his Light and Heat. Nay, let us go farther ſtill, tho' we think not the Conſolations of the Almighty ſmall, but infinitely valuable, yet let us content our ſelves with his moſt kind, wiſe Diſpenſations, begging to be kept from Sin, and in our Love to God, tho' he conceal his from us; that his *Grace may be ſufficient for us*, to ſupport us under the Buffetings of Satan, and prickings of the *Thorn in the Fleſh*. I found great comfort in Reading *Rouſs's Myſtick Marriage*, and *Symonds of Deſertion*; where much of the ends of Deſertion are treated of in the former; and the difference between that and a real declenſion, with many other uſeful things, in the latter.

Some are apt to Idolize Comfort, and grow peeviſh; ready to ſhake off the Yoke if they have it not; and grow weary of waiting for the Lord any longer; a perverſe dangerous Temper. Jeſus Chriſt will be an inexhauſtible ſpring of Comfort to his, firſt

or laſt, but we muſt give him leave to time it. What an Idol, ſays Dr. *Harris*, do ſome make of Comfort, as if it were their Chriſt? The difference is not great, whether it come at Death, or an Hour after, ſince it would come aſſuredly. Some again loſe their Comforts, by nouriſhing too great ſcrupuloſity, as others by contracting careleſneſs, and hardneſs of Heart: Fearfulneſs and ſecurity, equally invite the cruel Enemy to inſult us. But if we miſs or loſe our Comforts, if it be not remarkably thro' our own default and diſobedience, we muſt acquieſce in the Pleaſure of God, till the bleſſed Day dawn. If we ſtudy and underſtand the Covenant of Grace, and are but ſincere, 'twill give us quietneſs under all our Infirmities, and eſtabliſhment, tho' Comforts flow not in upon us.

See his Life by Clark, *p.* 324, *and* 325.

Some may miſtake the abatement of Comfort, for an abſolute removal; nay, it's poſſible it may be the ſame, and yet ſome may miſtruſt the loſs of it, at leaſt a great declenſion of it: For when long enjoy'd, it makes not that impreſſion it did at firſt, eſpecially if they came out of great Darkneſs; for then it's like ſtanding in the open Sun coming out of a Dungeon, which makes the change very impreſſive: But after a long and habitual Sun-ſhine, tho' the ſweet and benign Influences are juſt the ſame, yet uſe and time abate gradually the tranſports of the Senſation. Thus they may think they are much of the loſing hand, when it's juſt the

the ſame. I derogate not in the leaſt deſignedly from the excellency of divine Gifts, by any compariſons of this Nature; nor in the leaſt to prejudice God's Prerogative.

But, O my Soul, haſt thou not ſinn'd away thine, which is much worſe than a ſimple removal? How unworthily haſt thou improv'd the Showers and Sun-ſhine of Heaven, the Frowns and Smiles, the various Culture of thy bleſſed Maſter? His very Anger was from Love, his ſharpeſt Scourges to whip thee home, and prevent thy tumbling into the bottomleſs gulph of Perdition. When kindeſt treatment won thee not, what a merciful ſeverity was it, to ſcare thee out of the Chains of Hell? After all theſe mighty Obligations, and thy own eager Reſolutions and generous Purpoſes, how miſerably haſt thon fail'd and drop'd ſhort? Oh how ſtrong were the impreſſions of Love and eternal Gratitude, with full Self-dedication in the Hours of Diſtreſs, upon Preſumption of Deliverance? But how ſhamefully have all thoſe warm fits languiſh'd, even to half expiring? The ever bleſſed and glorious Sun of Righteouſneſs dawn'd upon thee in the very ſhades of Death and Hell, like the Morning Light ſpread upon the Mountains, more and more till perfect Day. The Twilight then ſurpriz'd thee, even the firſt ſtep of hope from the bottomleſs Pit of infernal Horror; but as the Day advanc'd, how didſt thou bask in thoſe refreſhing Beams?

What

What a Heaven upon Earth was it to feel thy ſelf aſcending from the Suburbs of Hell, the very abyſſes of Deſpair? But when thou felt, as it were, Heaven deſcending to meet thee halfway, was thou not tranſported as if thou wert there? How didſt thou exult and triumph in the bleſſed God, and his ſweet Jeſus? In his moſt amazing Pity, and ſurprizing Mercy? And can all this ſo ſoon, ſo very ſoon, be forgot? If the Charms of the richeſt Goodneſs don't ſtick by thee, yet how canſt thou ſhake off the remembrance of ſo dreadful a Miſery? Miſery, that ſtuck once ſo cloſe to thee, as to appear a part of thy very Conſtitution, into which it ſeem'd woven: Oh reflect and be humble: See what an impotent Wretch thou art, while a little left to thy ſelf: Should God now quite leave thee, as thou deſerveſt, how wouldſt thou languiſh into Formality, and negligence, even to perfect Libertiniſm? Be zealous then, O my Soul, and repent, beg God's Holy Spirit inceſſantly. Grant it my deareſt Jeſus. *Amen.*

Lord! what a wretched Creature is poor Man, in the leaſt left to himſelf! How ſoon does he dwindle in his good Intentions, and forget the awful Terrors of thy Majeſty, and ſenſe of thy intolerable Wrath; his own infinite hazard, Intereſt and Duty; together with the exceeding greatneſs of thy ineffable Mercy; tho' all this once affected him with the quickeſt pungency! Lord pardon and reſtore me

to

to the Light of thy bliſsful Countenance, for thy moſt free Mercies ſake in Jeſu, my moſt adorable Saviour.

As the neglect and abuſe of the holy Sacrament, had no ſmall hand in my Sins, and their juſt puniſhment, ſo I ſhall end with that bleſſed Ordinance.

Tho' I had ſome eaſe before I ventured on ſo great a Duty, ſome compoſure of Mind being neceſſary, yet I had no comfort till after that Performance. It pleaſed God, after ſome ſollicitations of my Friends, to encline my Heart to this glorious Feaſt of Love. In the Morning I aroſe in ſome diſorder, but his kind Providence caſt a Sermon in my way, which he made ſtrangely encouraging to me; for ever bleſſed be his holy Name. I went forth after it, with a cheerful Spirit, and from that very Seaſon the Day clear'd up; and I have ever ſince continued it, without the leaſt return of Horror, to my inconceivable advantage: And I think I may be bold to ſay, without vanity, to the exceeding great glory of his moſt free Grace, without the leaſt ſhadow of any deſert in me, but quite the contrary, that I ne'er ſince went to that holy Table, but I felt a very remarkable aſſiſtance; not ſo much in Flights of Joy, as in a peculiar conſiſtence of Spirit, and a fix'd ſteddineſs of Mind, with clearneſs of Thought, great Serenity and Compoſure, with little or no Diſtraction; which tho' it haunt me too much in other Duties, yet, which is remarkable, very rarely in this. Some fiery ſhafts Satan

tan has ſpent upon me at this ſeaſon from his quiver; but God help'd me immediately to quench and repel them. I wiſh I could ſay my attainments after it were ſuitable; but here, thro' careleſneſs, I have ſadly come ſhort, to my ſhame.

I mention this to give my All-glorious God the Praiſe of all entirely; to encourage drooping, deſponding Spirits, to haſten to this bleſſed Feaſt *of Fat things, and Wine upon the Lees well refined*: This Bread of Life, and Wine of the Kingdom, contriv'd by the Lord of Life and Glory, to ſatisfie hungry Souls; to ſtrengthen and revive the weak and weary; to keep and encreaſe Spirit and Vigor in the ſtrong.

Let no ſincere Heart be dejected, that feels not that preſence of Mind and freedom of Spirit, God in his overflowing bounty bleſs'd me with: For as I have great reaſon to adore him in the diſtribution of the leaſt ſpiritual favour, (tho' this I dare not but eſteem as a very great one) yet have I reaſon to bluſh in confuſion, that my after Succeſſes are no greater, more anſwerable to ſuch Indulgencies. Meaſure therefore the benefit of this Ordinance, by the true Meaſure of the Sanctuary; and value an encreaſe of Spiritual Strength the better to reſiſt or conquer a ſtubborn Temptation, or Corruption; or to walk more cloſely and evenly with God, than preſent Tranſports and Extaſies: Nay, tho' Clouds and Darkneſs enwrap thee, yet hold on reſolutely, and the Day's thy own finally.

The Devil, I know, abuſes many, urging the Impenitent to come out of falſe Ends and baſe Deſigns; to ſtop the Clamours of Conſcience; to gain repute or qualifications; and ſome are ſo ſtupid, as to think it works like a Charm, and content themſelves with meer Formalities. Others again, Humble, Holy Souls, he ſcares from it, as tho' it was rather *Moſes* than the Lord's Table, as one well Phraſes it. Of both theſe, he makes his Earnings; the one, he wraps up in ſecurity, and expoſes to God's fearful Judgments; the other he torments, if he cannot ruin them; and keeps them in a ſtarving Condition, cheating them out of many ſpiritual Enjoyments. God ſtoops the loweſt to us in this Ordinance of any; if we Sign and Seal faithfully his Covenant, he will Seal us by his Spirit to the Day of Redemption; and ratifie in Heaven, what we do on Earth: But Wo to them that reject and deſpiſe this condeſcention of the Almighty, and the Blood of his Son, as all do more or leſs, that neglect or trifle in this Ordinance, or comply with it, for ſome Carnal, Baſe, Selfiſh end. *Many are Sick and Weak*, and others fall *aſleep* for abuſing it now, as well as formerly; be ſure hardneſs of Heart and other ſpiritual Judgments attend it, which are much worſe.

Hales *on the Sacrament, p.* 61.

A very memorable Author tells us: "The Uſes and Ends of the Lord's-Supper, can be no more than ſuch as are "mention'd in the Scriptures, and they "are but Two. 1. The Commemorati-

"on

" on of the Death and Paſſion of the Son " of God, ſpecifi'd by himſelf at the Inſtitu- " tion of the Ceremony . 2. To teſtifie " our Union with Chriſt, and Commu- " nion one with another; which end St. " *Paul* hath taught us.

Now when we have ſo ſolemn an Inſtitution calculated to ſuch bleſſed purpoſes; if we have any ſuitable and becoming apprehenſions of the worth and dignity of our Saviour; of his moſt tranſcendent and amazing Love, and God's kind deſigns towards us, iſſuing as much in our good, as his glory; how can we ſo eaſily diſpenſe with neglects of this kind? Are we not in more danger of diſhonoring God by Contempt or Diſregard of any of his Sanctions, than by any expreſſions of concern we can regularly pretend to honor Him with, by compliance with the reſt? Eſpecially if they be of a very important nature, expreſſive of moſt kind Intentions, and vaſt Condeſcention?

Some holy Souls are diſcourag'd by too needleſs ſcrupuloſity, but I fear much worſe lies at the bottom of moſt Mens neglect. Shou'd ſuch be call'd to great Privileges and Dignities by great Men on Earth, we ſhou'd ſcarce find them ſo full of affected Modeſty in pretences of unworthineſs. In Caſes of ſecular Advantage and Preferment, Men are counted more nice than wiſe, when they refuſe a good offer, and ſeem very loth to complement themſelves into ſuch inconveniencies, as Self-denial in ſuch Caſes bring with it. Who plead their

Unworthineſs, as a Reaſon for non-acceptance of Places of Wealth and Honor, unleſs it be thought a pretty device to uſher in the Favours with more ſecurity? And who ſticks at Pains and Care to fit and qualify himſelf for a good Office? Wou'd Men apply cloſely theſe conſiderations to their Spiritual concerns, and dive deeply into their deceitful Hearts, to take a narrow view of the Springs of Action in thoſe weighty Matters, they might diſcover the rotten Principles that lurk there, the true Cauſe of all Self-flattery and frivolous Excuſes, of that treachery and falſity, that neither God nor Conſcience will long take at their Hands. Had Men but half the Faith and Love for God, his Ordinances, and another World, they have for this; the far greateſt part of their pretences of this kind, wou'd ſink and diſappear.

Vid. Dr. Horneck *of Conſideration.*

Inconſideration is the Root of this great miſchief, and truly of every thing detrimental to our Souls: The Miſery that attends it, and the benefits that manifeſtly follow thoughtfulneſs, ſhou'd recommend the Duty to all.

This wou'd gradually diſpoſe the Soul to a habit of pleaſant Meditation, the Experience whereof wou'd recommend its excellent uſefulneſs, the force of which none can imagine that have not try'd it.

Bp. Hall *of Meditation, p.* 114.

"Unto this only neglect, let me aſcribe "the commonneſs of that *Laodicean* tem- "per of Men; and that dead coldneſs "which has ſtricken the Hearts of many,

"having

" having left them nothing but the Bo-
" dies of Men, and the Viſors of Chriſti-
" ans; to this only they have not Me-
" ditated. It is not more poſſible to live
" without a Heart, than to be devout
" without Meditation. Let him Curſe me
" on his Death-Bed that plies this Duty,
" if he acknowledge not theſe Hours
" placed the moſt happily in his whole
" Life; if he then wiſh not he had worn
" out more Days in ſo profitable and hea-
" venly a Work.

God now caſt me upon a Bed of dangerous Sickneſs, and then I felt the Bleſſed advantages of this holy Ordinance. I receiv'd the Sentence of Death in my ſelf, but God kept my Spirit pacate and reſign'd: and had he not, as circumſtances then ſtood, what I apprehended, I think muſt inevitably have come to paſs. All my Fear is, that I kept my Eye too much fix'd on the poor little I had done, which I deſire may ever be entirely faſten'd on my dear Saviour. I did not then call for the Sacrament in a hurry, as I have known ſome, that wou'd not be perſwaded to take it ſooner; tho' if God pleaſe to give me opportunity, I deſire to make it the laſt and ſolemn act of my Life. We ſhou'd uſe all precaution, that we act not our laſt part indecently, or in a diſconſolate hurry, which ſhou'd be Conſecrated more immediately to the Glory of God and the credit of Religion; and the ſureſt way to attain this, is early to conſecrate our Lives to him in the ways of his own appoint-

ment; For he has promiſed *to Honor them that Honor him*; and in what can we do it more, than in reverencing and complying with his Inſtitutions? Let us remember, that time will put all our beſt Antidotes to the Trial; for as one well ſays; "Tho' "a Good Man will not fear to die, yet "he may to be let into Eternity. After my Recovery, I read St. *Auſtin*'s Meditations with great delight: And found a ſtrange reinforcement of my Faith, in reading Dr. *Parkers* Law of Nature: Books in their different kind very excellent. But to Thee, O Lord, be entirely aſcrib'd the Glory of all the Succeſs I felt.

Mr. Boyl.

Let ſuch as will not take pains to prepare for the Sacrament, or endeavour that ſtrictneſs of Life which ſhou'd follow it, conſider how dearly they love, and one day muſt pay for their Luſts; how they deſpiſe the great Salvation. Let ſuch as feel Terrors in the diſcharge of their Duty in this kind, examine, whether ſome unrepented of, or allow'd Sin, be not the Cauſe of it. I ſeldom went without ſome dread, while matters were at this paſs with me. I know Satan's wicked Arts are numberleſs; he may abuſe an honeſt Heart, under indiſpoſition of Body, and ſo hope to diſcourage the ſincere: But uſually in ſuch Caſes, in the uſe of Means, God ſpeaks Peace to ſuch; let none then be diſcourag'd, but reſolutely hold on in the Strength of Jeſus Chriſt.

May holy timerous Souls, that ſtand off out of a ſenſe of their unworthineſs, aſſume Courage, and know that Humility, expreſs'd in Self-judging, and Self-abhorrence, is one of the beſt Preparatives for this Love-Feaſt: That the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt, is the beſt Antidote againſt the remains of Corruption, and the beſt means to make them as good as they deſire to be; and till they comply, ne'er let them expect it, nor true comfort; for God will have his Ordinance honor'd.

I have known ſome meaſure their ſafety by their peace, and attribute their Peace to their being of a Party, with no concern expreſs'd about principles: Others again, have deſiſted from going to the Sacrament, becauſe they went with ſome Terror, but met with ſome quiet in the forbearance. Wou'd ſuch conſider, that the Means Men of any Perſuaſion uſe muſt be effectual to a ſound Converſion, or there can be no Salvation; that there's a falſe Peace, as well as a true: And that to truſt to what God lays no ſtreſs upon, and decline a plain Duty, is no way to a true one, they might ſoon ſee thro' the Deluſion: Wou'd ſuch as find eaſe in the neglect of the Sacrament, reſolutely return to their Duty, the Enemy, it's probable, would oppoſe them fiercely, but that Terror would end in Comfort after a ſtruggle; whereas if upon a neglect there may be ſome quiet, it only forebodes a Storm gathering apace, tho' the Signs of it appear not.

May ſuch, as after a Storm have gain'd Peace, ne'er be prodigal of it, but by all means, endeavour to maintain Humility and Watchfulneſs, and live in the conſtant uſe of this bleſſed Ordinance. So much Corruption as remains, (as ſome there is in the beſt) ſo much hazard there is of growing ſecure, and loſing what we enjoy, and then, it may be, double diligence will not recover it.

Let ſuch of us as do attend this glorious Feaſt of Love, bleſs God heartily for Opportunities and Diſpoſitions of this kind; and labour to improve them by frequent and more careful approaches. Let us gird up the Loins of our Mind, and the whole Armor of God, cloſer about us, and dread the Thoughts of appearing without the Wedding Garment, *viz.* Faith and Love in ſome Exerciſe. Here we may behold Sin in its true Nature, and moſt affecting Colours; what treatment we might expect at God's Hand, had not his bleſſed Son been treated ſo ſeverely for our ſakes: What vaſt hopes we may entertain of the greateſt Favours imaginable, after ſuch full ſatisfaction offer'd and accepted, if we will but lay faſt hold of our own Mercies. And a due ſenſe of theſe matters can't fail to humble us, and endear the bleſſed Jeſus to us; and while we are moſt depreſs'd with ſelf-loathing and abhorrence of Sin; we ſhall feel our Hearts moſt free and dilated in Praiſe. And after ſuch bleſſed Movements of Soul, we can't well fail of ſuitable Zeal, and holy Emulation

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in our Lives and Converſations. The ſenſe of what we have done, felt and enjoy'd, will ſtrangely inſpirit our Devotions, and they again enliven our Actions, till the happy and repeated Viciſſitudes bring us into the bleſſed Circle of Eternal Praiſes, and boundleſs, endleſs Fruitions.

We can't have a more noble Subject of Praiſe, nor a fitter occaſion to ſolemnize it powerfully and connaturally, than when our awful ſeriousdeportment,our eager,earneſt expreſſions of devotions,exciteandinflame one another mutually at theſe bleſſed Seaſons. And if we get Life and Heat for Action, and more vital Communion with God in private, by ſome quickning ſpark darted from his Altar, how nobly will all our Pains and Care be recompenc'd? Indevotion turns the beſt thing in the World into the worſt; Truth and Sincerity into Lying and Hypocriſie. If our Hearts are mended in this reſpect, let us think it a vaſt attainment, and thoſe excellent means, that promote it.

And when we reflect on theſe occaſions, upon ſuch an amazing Inſtance of Divine Love and Charity, what narrow contracted Spirit; what frozen Heart, can hold out againſt the power of its Charms? Will it not kindly thaw and expand it ſelf while it approaches ſo near the holy Fire of Divine Love? Will not thoſe ſacred Flames pervade the Breaſt, and enkindle ſome rapturous Paſſion, that ſhall diffuſe it ſelf with heavenly ardency over the whole Soul? Lovelineſs diſplay'd attracts

tracts Love and Admiration; but when Love expreſs'd at ſo coſtly a rate, in the bittereſt dying Agonies, concurs, and all to gain our Affections, is it poſſible for any to remain ſenſleſs and obdurate? Can we ſee God part with his only Son! in pity to obſtinate Rebels and haters of him? And him ſo freely parting with his precious Life for his Enemies and Perſecutors, and not find enlarg'd Bowels to all, and a readineſs to forgive the greateſt Injuries and Affronts? Shall we have the Heart to appear niggardly and parſimonious in our Offerings, while we expect the greateſt Bleſſings, and commemorate the higheſt act of Bounty? So provoke God to withold the Treaſures of his Mercy he was juſt pouring in upon us, and good Men to upbraid us with Covetouſneſs? What folly, and ſtupid ingratitude muſt Men be guilty of, before they can give any juſt occaſions of complaint in this kind?

See Bp. Patrick's *Menſa Myſtica.*

Thus have I ventur'd to relate that part of my Life, moſt are ſhie of communicating. The Royal Prophet ſays; *Come and hear all you that Fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul*: To ſtir up others to Praiſe God, and ſtrengthen their Faith and truſt in him. This, I hope, has been my Deſign, and where I have fail'd, I beſeech the good Lord to pardon the frailties of his Servant.

Pſal. 66. 16.

I will

" I Will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou
" haſt lifted me up, and haſt not made
" my Enemies to rejoice over me. I am
" afflicted and ready to die from my Youth
" up: While I ſuffer thy Terrors I am
" diſtracted. Thy fierce Wrath went o-
" ver me, thy Terrors have cut me off:
" They came round about me daily like
" Water, they compaſſed me about to-
" gether: Thou haſt laid me in the low-
" eſt Pit, in darkneſs in the Deeps: Thy
" Wrath lay hard upon me, and Thou
" haſt afflicted me with all thy Waves.
" My Lovers and my Friends ſtood a-
" loof from my Sore, and my Kinſ-
" men ſtood afar off. Thy Arrows ſtuck
" faſt in me, and thy Hand preſſed me
" ſore: There was no ſoundneſs in my
" Fleſh becauſe of thine Anger: Neither
" was there any reſt in my Bones, becauſe
" of my Sin: My Confuſion was ever be-
" fore me: I was ſore broken, and roared by
" reaſon of the diſquietneſs of my Heart:
" My Life drew nigh unto the Grave: I
" was counted with them that go down in-
" to the Pit. In theſe diſtreſſes I lifted
" up my Soul to Thee, and Thou haſt re-
" joiced the Soul of thy Servant, delivering
" it from the loweſt Hell: For Thou art
" great and doſt wondrous things, Thou
" art God alone. Thou haſt brought me
" out of a horrible Pit, and ſet my Feet
" on a Rock, and eſtabliſh'd my Goings,
" and put a new Song in my Mouth, e-
" ven Praiſe unto our God: Many ſhall

" ſee

" ſee it, and fear, and ſhall truſt in the
" Lord: Bleſſed is that Man that makes
" Thee his truſt, and reſpecteth not ſuch
" as turn aſide to Lies. I have declared
" thy Faithfulneſs, O Lord, and thy Sal-
" vation: I have not concealed thy lov-
" ing kindneſs and thy Truth. With-
" hold not Thou thy tender Mercies from
" me, O Lord: let thy Loving-kindneſs
" and thy Truth continually preſerve me:
" In Thee, O Lord, I truſt, let me never
" be put to Confuſion. Let them be con-
" founded that ſeek after my Soul to de-
" ſtroy it. Let all thoſe that ſeek Thee,
" rejoyce and be glad in Thee; let ſuch
" as Love thy Salvation, ſay continually,
" the Lord be Magnified. In my Affli-
" ction, I ſaid in my haſt all Men were
" Liars, that God had forgotten me, and
" ſhut out my Prayer, and caſt me off ut-
" terly. And in my Proſperity I ſaid, I
" ſhall ne'er be moved. Lord, by thy fa-
" vour Thou haſt made my Mountain to
" ſtand ſtrong. Thou didſt hide thy Face,
" and I was tronbled. I'm poor and nee-
" dy, Lord think upon me: Thou art my
" help and my deliverer, make no tar-
" rying, O my God. Turn my Mourn-
" ing into Rejoicing, and once more gird
" me with Gladneſs: To the end that
" my Glory may ſing Praiſe to Thee and
" not be ſilent. O Lord my God, I will
" give Thanks unto Thee for ever.

I long ſince intended this, but ſtill from time to time deferr'd it; till a particular Provi-

Providence made me forthwith ſet about it. And all I can ſay for it, is, that I beg'd God's aſſiſtance, and hope have had it, in bringing many Paſſages to Mind; and that I have related all as near matter of fact, as I could. I have met with ſome diſcouragements, and peculiar Temptations in the writing of it, but God has carry'd me through. I conclude therefore with Praiſe to the Almighty, for the wonders of his Love to me ever of old; for his aids and aſſiſtance in this performance; begging moſt heartily his Bleſſing may go along with it, for the good of ſome poor Soul, to His Glory, for dear Jeſus's ſake. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*

I appeal now ſolemnly to the great *Jehovah* for the truth of the Narrative I here have made, as to the main, tho' I may have fail'd in ſome Circumſtances, but never willingly: And have been as faithful in the repreſentation of my Sentiments about matter of fact, as the reſult of my pure Convictions. And from this conſideration I wou'd take an occaſion, if any can prevail, to conjure deſpondent Spirits to truſt to and hope in the infinite Mercies of God, and Merits of Chriſt Jeſus. If you refuſe to be comforted from ſuch a pregnant Inſtance of Divine Compaſſion, know, 'twill one Day riſe up in Judgment againſt you to upbraid your Infidelity. And let the obdurate and careleſs, that may chance to caſt an Eye here, be perſwaded by ſuch as know the Terrors

Terrors of the Lord; for unleſs they Repent, they muſt feel them, and periſh for ever. I ſhall leave with ſuch an Expreſſion of an excellent Perſon, by way of concluſion.

Dr. Jackſon *Tom.* 3. *p.* 419.

" When the Judge ſhall appear in his Glory, " the Book of Conſcience ſhall be fully o- " pen'd, the impreſſion of every ſinful " Thought or Action ſhall then become le- " gible: Not a Syllable of what we have " ſpoken to our ſelves ſhall be loſt, and e- " very Letter or Syllable which hath not " been waſh'd away by the Blood of the " Lamb, ſhall be as a *Stigma* or *Brand* to " the Soul and Conſcience wherein it is " found, and ſhall fret as an incurable " Gangreen and Cancer. Every Seed of " Corruption, whether propagated by our " firſt Parents, or ſown by our ſelves, " which ſeem'd to lie dead without Mo- " tion, unleſs they be truly Mortifi'd by " the Spirit of God, ſhall at the appea- " rance of the Sun of Righteouſneſs be- " gin to quicken, and grow ripe in a " Moment. And albeit theſe Seeds be as " many in number as the Sand, tho' our " whole Fleſh or bodily Man be more " full of them, than any Fiſhes Ventri- " cle is full of Spawn, yet the leaſt of " them ſhall grow for its malignant qua- " lity into a Serpent, and ſting the Soul " and Body where it is bred, like an Ad- " der. Theſe are the beſt Fruits, which " they that daily ſow to the Fleſh, ſhall " then reap of the Fleſh, even Corrupti- " on, Sorrow and Torments incorrupti- " ble and inſufferable, yet perpetually to " be ſuffer'd by them. Moſt

Moſt Bleſſed God, if any ſtupid, unbelieving Sinner, ſhall caſt his Eye on theſe Lines by thy Providence; let thy Spirit of Life and Power ſo breath on them and his dark, wretched Soul, that ſome kindly effect may follow: And if nothing leſs will do, mercifully ſlake the Center of his Heart with ſome of theſe dreadful Terrors here deſcrib'd: Let him feel how real, terrible and unſupportable one drop of thy Wrath is, falling upon his guilty, awaken'd Conſcience; that he may proſtrate himſelf in deepeſt Humility and Self-abaſement at the Footſtool of thy dreadful Majeſty, and ſo obtain Mercy. If any poor, humble, doubting, deſponding Soul, conſult this record of thy Judgments and boundleſs Mercy, permit him not to miſapply thy kind ſeverities to his prejudice; but graciouſly aſſiſt him to ſtrengthen his hopes in the fathomleſs Abyſſes of thy rich Mercy. Lord! what infidelity reigns in Mens Hearts! The Sadducee believes not thy Being, no, tho' one roſe from the Dead; nor a trembling, awaken'd Soul, thy Mercy, tho' Thou ſend one, as it were, from the Grave and Hell, to proclaim it's boundleſs. Dear God! moſt effectually pity both; eſpecially pour in the Oil of Joy and Gladneſs on wounded Spirits; make the dejected and poor in Spirit abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghoſt. And let all that peruſe theſe Memoirs with an honeſt, upright Heart, find a whet to ſerioufneſs, and a reinforcement to Faith. And God grant,

not

not one Tittle of what's here expreſs'd, may riſe up in Judgment againſt thy poor unworthy Servant at the great day; but ever vouchſafe him ſuch large effuſions of thy Grace as may help him to live up in ſincerity to his Convictions; that he prove not a Caſt-away, while he endeavours to ſave others, for Jeſus thy Bleſſed Son's ſake. *Amen.*

Now to the only wiſe God, our Saviour, be Glory and Majeſty, Dominion and Power, by Angels and Men, both now and ever. Amen.

MVSEVM BRITAN. NICVM

THE Exemplary Life and Character of *James Bonnell* Eſq; late Accomptant General of *Ireland*. By *W. Hamilton*, A. M. Arch-deacon of *Armagh*. 3*d*. Edit. with Improvements from Mr. *Bonnell*'s private Papers.

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